

It was about seventy five miles to Irondale and took about two days to make the trip. I could sit in a wagon and drive a team, and this I did the entire trip. My brothers put me in one of the houses on my father's old farm which they had bought after my father died.

For the next two years I was unable to do but very little work. My neighbors and kinsfolk were very kind to me. At the following session of the St. Louis conference I was given a superannuate relation. A preacher is not entitled to this relation only for a total disability. While this disability lasts he is paid a sum of money the amount of which depends on how much is collected on this claim. At that time this fund was quite small. It was divided among the several claimants according to their needs. The first year after my superannuation the conference gave me one hundred and fifty dollars, the second year seventy five dollars, and the third year fifty dollars.

I preached some when able and the opportunity came my way. My health improved, and I tried to farm. Even before I laid down my crutches, my wife and I would plant a little patch of corn, make garden, and, with the milk from a cow I had bought, we managed to live.

I said that when I left Reynolds County I sold my little farm. This was a mistake. I did not sell it till a year afterward--maybe longer. I do not remember the exact time. I do know that after we came to Irondale I bought a cow from my half brother, George, giving him twenty five dollars. The cow died sometime afterward, and we named her orphan calf Luck. My wife raised it on butter milk which my sister-in-law gave her. She went three quarters of a mile every morning to get it.

My health having improved so I could resume work in the conference I told my presiding elder that if the conference could not carry me another year as a superannuate, as I was in debt, I would have to locate. That meant the severance of my relations to the annual conference which I did not want to do if there was any way out of it. This conversation with my presiding elder was in the spring before the session of the conference in the following September or October. Before the date of the conference arrived I had arranged my affairs so there was nothing to prevent me from taking work and going anywhere the Bishop might send me. Just before conference, one of our children got sick which prevented me from being present except part of the first day.

I asked my presiding elder if he could tide me over another year. He said no. He was too busy, as presiding elders always are at conference. I had no further chance to talk with him, and it was near the time of the train that was to take me home. On account of my sick child I could not afford to miss it. I had to leave. It was not ten minutes after my conversation with the elder until he moved to locate me. I had just stopped outside the church door to speak to one of the preachers when Brother Russell came and asked me why I had located. I was so astonished and so put out that I was simply abnormal. I could not pull myself together in my thinking. I had no intention of locating, nor had I requested it.

I have been timid and fearful. In those days I could not face a conference of preachers without great embarrassment. And now, even if I had had the courage, I did not have the time to do so. Feeling sure that if the conference knew the facts in the case it would reconsider its action I asked two of the older preachers who were prominent in the conference to move a reconsideration of my case in the matter of my location which they promised to do, but was afterward informed they did not do it.

So I was located without my consent or any complaint against me. Had this not occurred I would now have an unbroken relation with the conference for fifty three years (now, 1932, sixty three.)

A few years previous to this time I was sung down in a conference love feast in the city of Kirkwood by that old veteran of the conference, Father Berryman, who, as I think led the opposition to my admission on trial. I think the same old influence was responsible for my location. After all, let us hope, it was due to a misunderstanding between myself and my presiding elder. It seemed to me that he acted hastily in the matter, but there is no suspicion on my part that he intended to do what he did before coming to the seat of the conference.

The presiding elder has oversight of all the preachers in his district. They are virtually in his hands. He is the Bishop's adviser in the matter of making the appointments, and it may be that my elder had determined beforehand to do just what he did--move my location. Perhaps I was to blame more than anyone else.

There was nothing for me to do but to continue on the farm. I did not ask the conference nor my presiding elder for work as a supply. My location came at the end of my three years of superannuation.

What time I could spare from my farm work I cut hoop poles and sold them at thirty cents per hundred. I also cut cord wood and hauled it to town selling it at one dollar and fifty cents a cord. I raised a colt every year and by and by had a good team of horses. With the two cows I bought when I sold my little farm in Reynolds County I raised quite a bunch of cattle. And yet I could not keep even with the world. My family was getting large, the expenses of living increasing, and we had to scrimp to get along. My credit was good, and I drew on my face more than I paid for. By and by the merchant had a bill against me of a hundred and fifty dollars but was kind enough to take one of my horses in payment of the debt.

At the end of two years after my location I applied for readmission into the conference. This session of the conference was at Bonne Terre, Missouri. I did not attend. When my application was presented a noted preacher and an ex-presiding elder made a motion that the conference request my presiding elder to withdraw my application and it carried. One reason stated by the mover of the motion was that I was not a well man, and the conference had better wait a while longer. Another presiding elder objected because I had nine children. He said he would not vote for any man who had that many children. So I was out. But the

conference appointed me to Richwoods circuit as a supply in order, I suppose, to test my ability as to health. It was in the north end of Washington County.

I went to the first quarterly meeting with the presiding elder that I might get a better knowledge of the work. It was a poor circuit with congregations scattered over parts of Washington and Crawford Counties. As I remember I was promised only one hundred and fifty dollars. To do the work as it should be done would take my entire time. In giving me this circuit I suppose the conference thought I would be willing to go anywhere or take any kind of a charge. Moreover they may have thought me unfit or unworthy of anything better. Being a sick man I suppose they sent me to the hills for my health, but I did not go. This made five years I was inactive--three years as a superannuate, and two as a local preacher.

All this time God's word was as a fire in my bones. It was a fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay (Jer. 20:9.) About this time Brother Hogan, preacher in charge of the Potosi and Irondale charge hired me to fill his appointments for about six months for which, I think, I received twelve dollars per month. Then I filled Brother Smith's appointment on the Bellview circuit on account of sickness in his family. I served part of one year under contract with the presiding elder who promised me twenty dollars a month. Brother Smith was to receive his salary while mine was to be paid by the presiding elder. There was not a definite understanding by the people. They thought that if I did the preaching I should have the pay. So I received a little pay from the members of the church and only ten of the twenty promised per month by the presiding elder.

About this time, maybe some earlier, there arose in the conference trouble over the St. Louis Advocate. I do not remember the particulars or the causes that led to the strife, but I do know that Dr. McAnally, Logan D. Dameron, and Dr. Thos. M. Finney were the principal actors. I am sure it grew out of the management of the Advocate. The strife continued over a period of several years and was the occasion of much wrangling and bitter feeling among the members of the conference. They were divided into two factions. Mr. Dameron's character was arrested and he was expelled from the church. He applied for membership in another charge and was received by the pastor in violation of the law of the church. This involved the administration of another preacher. That got him into trouble and so the strife enlarged and widened.

An opposition paper was started with Dr. J. E. Godbey as editor. Mr. Dameron owned the Advocate, or largely so. Dr. McAnally was its editor appointed by the conference. Finally his character was arrested at an annual conference held at Farmington, Bishop Keener presiding, but the committee appointed to investigate the case reported no trial necessary.

The principal leaders in this unfortunate controversy on the one side were T. M. Finney, J. E. Godbey, Dr. Wilson, and J. W. Lewis, ministers, and R. M. Scruggs and Samuel Cupples, laymen. On the other side were Dr. McAnally and Dr. Dameron, a layman, and Mr. Carter. These were the

prominent men of the conference and they largely controlled it. The opposition to Dr. McAnally and Mr. Dameron was strong and well organized. Mr. Cupples and Mr. Scruggs were rich. They were great benefactors and gave largely of their wealth in the interest of the church. The church in the bounds of the St. Louis conference owes them a debt of gratitude for their beneficence. At this time the salaries of the preachers, especially on the circuits, were small and these men were always helping the men on the hard country charges. While pastor at Houston I received from them and others of St. Louis substantial help. After the storm that blew the town of Licking away they sent me seventy five dollars. I was pastor at Licking at the time.

St. Louis Methodism owes a great deal of its prosperity to Samuel Cupples and Richard Scruggs. There are few Methodist churches in the city that do not owe their existence to these men who gave of their wealth in their erection. They were always helping some needy cause. Mr. Cupples gave me money in small amounts at different times. I thought so much of him that I named one of my boys Samuel Cupples. During the trouble as above stated Mr. Cupples and Mr. Scruggs, at a conference session while this strife was at its peak, banqueted quite a bunch of young preachers at the home of Mr. Scruggs. Of course we regarded this as a high honor--at least I did--though I was so bashful I did not know what to do with my hands. It was an honor to be the guests of these eminent men.

All this happened while the trouble in the conference as related was at high pitch. Dr. Wilson was presiding elder of the St. Louis district, a late transfer from the South, and he had induced a number of young preachers in Dixie to transfer to the St. Louis conference, and they would naturally vote in favor of any question sponsored by their friend. It is worthy of note that there was no banqueting before the trouble started nor after it ended. I speak of these things because they relate to other things I shall refer to later.

It is natural to conclude that these new transfers would vote with their presiding elder on questions coming up in the conference sessions, such as the management of the church periodicals, the educational and other interests of the church and the election of delegates. Also it is easily seen what an effect it would have on a lot of young preachers and older ones, for that matter, from the country charges to be feasted as guests in the home of these rich men. They would very likely adhere to the party to which these men belonged and vote as they did.

Then there were other factors in the count. The many presents and the help in times of need would have an influence in allying the recipients of these gifts with the giver when any measure came up in which they were interested. It is mighty difficult to act contrary to the wishes of one who has stood by you in time of need.

I have always striven to be just and sincere in what I did regardless of what others might do or say. I had rather be right than to be the world's most renowned and at the same time be wrong. I have always acted conscientiously regardless of the cost. My sympathies were with Dr. McAnally and his friends though they never manifested any special interest in me. To



them I was just a country circuit rider though they esteemed me as a brother is Christ. I voted with them and was opposed to the tactics on the other side.

I have always suspicioned that all this banqueting and feasting of the young preachers was to draw them to their side in the controversy then raging in the conference. Why do I think so?

Two events transpired, one at a district conference and the other at an annual conference, which confirmed me in my suspicions. At the annual conference in which the case of Dr. McAnally was pending Mr. Cupples met me in the vestibule of the church and putting his hands on my shoulders said: "Mr. Robinson, how are you going to vote?" I said, "I do not know. I have not decided." Then he said to a brother preacher standing by, "Take him (meaning me) and have him sit by you and see that he votes right." I had a short time before been talking with Mr. Carter, Dr. McAnally's son-in-law, and I suppose Mr. Cupples saw me. I was indignant and felt insulted. I now had no trouble in deciding how I was going to vote. I wouldn't have sat by that preacher under any consideration. Mr. Cupples had struck the wrong Irishman.

At a district conference held at Caledonia while I was supplying the Bellview circuit and just before the election of delegates to the annual conference Dr. Wilson, the presiding elder, put in my hand a ten dollar bill which I supposed was part payment of the twenty dollars per month he promised me for filling Brother Smith's work. As I received nothing before nor after this I concluded the ten dollars he gave me was to curry favor so I would vote for delegates to the annual conference favorable to the faction to which he belonged.

Before the close of this district conference I asked one of the preachers if it had ever occurred to him that these men were using money to influence votes on their side. He answered my question with an emphatic "No!" He also said, "The infernal thing ought to be blown up." I suppose he meant the Advocate with all that pertained to it. He went straightway and told some of the preachers what I said. And I never received any more favors from that source. Mr. Cupples, as I remember, never spoke to me afterward. But I had watched the trend of things and it occurred to me that such was the case.

I would not impeach the motives of anyone. These men were loved and honored by the church. They are gone and to this good day their memory is as ointment poured forth. Their magnificent gifts to churches, to schools and hospitals are matters of public record. They are imperishable monuments to their generosity.

## CHAPTER XIX

A CONCLUSION  
 APPLICATION FOR READMISSION--READMITTED  
 LIBERTYVILLE CIRCUIT--SALARY  
 PLATTIN CIRCUIT  
 STEWARDS' MEETING--PASTOR ANGERED  
 BUYING FIFTY SEVEN ACRES OF LAND ON FAITH  
 PARSONAGE

I am certain that what I am writing will in the mind of the church people of St. Louis and the older members of the conference be resented and clothed with slanderous meaning. It will recoil upon my head, but be it so. I will abide my time. I have been a member of the St. Louis conference and can safely say that the preachers I have known were as a class the best men I ever knew. Taking them as a whole, but few of them were unworthy of the love and the esteem of good men and women.

There are always a few in every conference, I presume, that dominate and control its proceedings. They, in order to further their own personal ambitions, will do things unworthy of the ministerial calling. To them place and power in the kingdom are coveted attainments. I have known some downright dishonest preachers. I have known even presiding elders to violate the law of the church and then dissemble to cover it up. I have known them to make false statements. I have known them to deceive the Bishop while presenting application for admission and for orders. I have known them to recommend the passage of unworthy characters. However, only a few were guilty of these things.

Another thing: a majority of this few were presiding elders. This office should be filled only by the ablest and best of men. Instead of it being filled, thus it has often been filled, by medium and inferior men. I can but speak what I have seen and known. I know but few preachers outside my own conference, but am sure they are just human like other people. They have their faults and failings, but God knows the heart and will give to all their dues when the secrets of the heart shall be made known.

At the end of two years after my rejection for readmission I made another attempt to be readmitted. When I first joined the conference I was single. All my children nearly were born in a Methodist parsonage. It would be unwise for a conference to accept a man who has spent most of his life in secular business with as large a family as I had, but my case was different. I had joined the conference before my marriage. I could not keep down the burning desire to preach the gospel of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I was dissatisfied. I had been called to the work of the ministry, and I could not give it up. It was not of choice. Necessity was laid upon me. I felt "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

My second application for readmission was at the conference in Sikeston, Bishop Hendrix presiding. I was in need of a suit of clothes suitable to the occasion, and my brother-in-law in St. Louis presented me with a nice Prince Albert suit. So I went up to conference spic and span. Clothes have a lot to do with the success or failure of any one. They go a long way in the estimation of the public. I have always tried to be neat in my appearance. I loathed a slouchy preacher. I wanted my clothes to be clean if they were old and faded. Am sure I was slighted and discounted often because they were worn and faded. This was an embarrassment to me, for I felt I was pitied without being respected by my brethren at least by the more favored of them.

Once at conference one of the preachers invited me to take a walk with him, and as we strolled along he told me of a receipt which would color a sunburnt coat and give it the appearance of a new one. I was wearing a coat that had seen several summers of service. Now this brother was a good friend of mine and was trying to be a friend indeed, but he did not know, and never will, what humiliation it brought to me as it reminded me of my poverty and of my inability to do any better. I knew that others had noticed what he saw about me and felt that the information he gave me was personal. But these things are only minor incidents in the life of mortals.

By and by all will stand on the same platform with the same rating according to the way our lives have been lived.

At this Sikeston conference I was as well dressed as any of the preachers. There could be no objection to me on account of my clothes. My moral character was without reproach, and I had many tokens of friendship among the brethren. Furthermore my acceptability as a preacher on the circuits I had traveled was never questioned, and I expected to be readmitted with but little, if any, opposition. But, alas! One never knows when adverse winds will blow. When the vote was taken it was so close that the chair could not decide and called for a standing vote which when counted stood one majority in my favor. That was a close shave. I do not know whether my case caused any debate or outspoken opposition to me. My impression is that it was a still hunt on the part of those who voted against me, and they nearly got their game. But I was in and to me that was enough.

As I look back over the way and think of the opposition to me from men and devils, even among my brethren, I wonder why I remained with a brotherhood organization--our annual conference--and my friends will certainly give me credit for dogged persistence.

At the close of the conference I was sent to Libertyville circuit. It was organized the year before with A. C. Johnson as preacher in charge. This was Brother Johnson's first year in the conference. The circuit did not pay much--about two hundred dollars. I was still living on my brother's farm and from there it was thirty miles to my nearest appointment. The circuit included Libertyville, Doe Run, Knob Lick, Mount Zion, Oakland, and Silver Lake.

With the help of my wife and little boys we managed to supplement my salary, and by keeping a cow and some chickens and farming on a small scale we got along after a sort. I did not have much time to study. I did my thinking horseback. I had good crowds to hear me the entire two years I was on the circuit. In fact I never did lose my crowd except at one or two churches on a certain charge.

The people on the Libertyville charge were fine folks and very kind to me. There was very little friction in the two years I was there. Wide difference in the salaries of preachers now and when I entered the ministry. Then a paid ministry with many was not in accord with the Scriptures. As they saw it the gospel was free. It was not that I was unacceptable, for people came long distances to hear me. But they had not been trained to pay. I held a revival at nearly all the preaching places and took a few into the church. When I left the charge I had many friends there.

#### PLATTIN CIRCUIT

I was sent from Libertyville to the Platin circuit. It was an old circuit, at one time the best in the conference, but now less than the average. In its early history it had some of the best preachers in the conference as pastors. In its bounds was only a part of the territory it formerly embraced. It was now called the Platin and Hemetite circuit. and Brother S. H. Renfro was appointed conjointly with me on the charge. It was a two weeks' charge, that is, preaching at each appointment every two weeks one preacher following the other each month.

By an arrangement of the presiding elder, probably at the suggestion of Brother Renfro, he took the Hemetite part which was on the railroad, virtually giving him a station, which left me eight churches in the country. This was done without consulting me. There was no parsonage on the circuit, and I had to continue to live on the farm, making it necessary for me to travel each week, if I made the trip that often, sixty to eighty miles. I usually went Saturday and returned Monday. Of course I did but little pastoral work but managed to see or visit most of my members during the year. Under such conditions, with the people and the preacher himself, there was bound to be some dissatisfaction, but the people were above the average in education and refinement. and I think they made due allowance for my inability to render them better service.

It might be inferred from what I have said that there was much dissatisfaction, but such was not the case. What there was came from a few men in one church, some from the outside. It started in the beginning of the year when I called the stewards together to make an estimate for the support of the ministry. This was according to the requirement of the discipline. At the opening service I stated the purpose of the meeting. This estimate is made after consultation with the pastor as to his necessities and considering the ability of the charge as to the amount they were to pay. Without asking me a question as to my needs the stewards arose and went out behind the church house. After a while they came back

and announced that two hundred and fifty dollars would be my salary. This happened on one of the oldest circuits in the conference and which had been served by some of its most prominent preachers.

The men who composed this stewards' meeting were not young men. They were men who had been active in the church and could not plead ignorance of its laws, especially in this particular case. There were few circuits that could boast of more wealth and beautiful homes and noted families. They doted on their ancestors and social standing and family names. Some of them were wealthy and aristocratic. They were kind to me in their homes, but from all appearances the preachers had allowed them to dictate to them in the management of the church. They were formal in religious worship and in their lives, and it was hard to determine their spiritual status. They are nearly all gone to their long home.

When they so utterly ignored me in the matter of the assessment I was hurt and indignant. It was humiliating to me and showed on their part shameful disrespect for their preacher whom they had accepted as their pastor for the conference year. The assessment they had made was inadequate for the support of myself and family, and we told them so with some spirit. They were well able to pay five or six hundred dollars and scarcely miss it. I told them I was used to work and could do any kind of manual labor, cut cord wood or do anything honorable to support my family, and I did. At the same time I do not remember missing one appointment during the entire year.

Under such conditions is it any wonder I lacked heart in my work and failed to render my best service? One man, and he not a member of the church and reputed to be a skeptic, largely ruled that church through his wife, a member and a good woman, and that church in a great measure ruled the circuit. I do not think I ever did as much hard work any year of my life as I did that year.

After I married one great desire was to have a home of my own. While in the local ranks I gathered together some property, a few cattle and a horse or two, and by borrowing a little money I bought fifty seven acres of my father's old farm which had been thrown outside a number of years and was grown up with sassafras bushes. I gave four hundred dollars for it and was five years paying for it. It had no house or building of any kind on it.

While on the Plattsburg circuit I undertook to build me a house. I lived close to the farm and while at home could do some work on it. When I began building I did not have a dollar and bought most of the lumber on time (one year.) I began by faith. When I started to tramp through to Dunklin County, as told in the beginning of these papers, it was by faith. I did not even sit down to count the cost.

My daughter, Maggie, taught school and bought the doors and windows. I hired a carpenter, Jeff Smith, for a dollar per day. He was a good Christian man. I hauled the lumber with my own team. Started to the sawmill by four o'clock in the mornings and often would not get back till

nine at night. One sawmill was eighteen miles and the other twelve. But when Saturday morning came I was off to my circuit forty miles away. Then back home Monday and at it again. The boys worked in the field raising corn and other things which added much to our food supply. My boys were obedient, safe to leave with the farm. They were loyal to their mother and are yet, though they have grown older and have families of their own.

Of the two hundred and fifty dollars promised at the beginning of the year I received about two hundred and twenty five or thirty. It is unfortunate for a charge not to have their preacher live with them. Had there been a parsonage I could have been with them, received more financial support and done better work.

At the end of the year my presiding elder informed me I would have to move. He said the people wanted a change. I asked him how extensive was the objection to me and he said from all over the circuit. This I very much doubted as I had many friends in the circuit and did not believe that after so many expressions of friendship they would be one thing to me and another to my elder. However, it was not unexpected to me as I was not satisfied with the service I was giving them.

From the beginning of my labor among them I had agitated the necessity of building a parsonage. It was surprising to learn that they did not want me to remain on the circuit. Before the circuit was made smaller they had, I think, a parsonage at Hemetite. I persisted in my efforts to induce them to build for the new charge. Previous to this a piece of land was given them for that purpose. I offered them a plan, but it did not meet with their approval. They finally took the whole matter in their own hands and built one inadequate and destined to be a source of inconvenience to preachers and their families in the years to come. An incident occurred this year, but in relating same I shall have to go back a few years.

## CHAPTER XX

TEACHING SCHOOL  
AN INNOCENT VICTIM--A HORSE TRADE  
DEATH OF A MEMBER--PREACHING THE WHOLE GOSPEL  
RICHWOODS CIRCUIT--AT THE POINT OF QUITTING  
CONFERENCE REPORT--A SHARP CONTENTION  
THE BISHOP--CONCLUSION

While local and living on my brother's farm I taught school at Hazel Glen in Washington County. I think I succeeded better teaching than preaching. At any rate I heard no objection until the school election in April when a proposition was made to build a larger school house. I was for it and Mr. ---, against it. Even he had expressed himself as being satisfied with the school just closed. In debating the question of a larger school building Mr. --- got out of humor and accused me as teacher of allowing things of which I was not guilty. I told him he was mistaken and he retorted, "You are a liar." He was in the chair. After the meeting I asked him why, if he knew these things, he did not come and tell me and he drew his fist as if to hit me. I said, "Don't you dare hit me, you dirty devil." Two of my nephews took it up and for a little while things looked shaky, but finally everything quieted down and no one was much out of humor. I was offered the next term of school provided Mr. --- and I would make friends. As I was not the aggressor I refused to make overtures to him and did not get the school.

During the next term of school there my children who were old enough to go to school had already had the whooping cough some years before, but one of the younger ones took it and the Board, finding it out sent all our children home. Before they would let them start again I had to go ten miles and to see a doctor and get a health certificate. While I was teaching the term before this my mare and eleven head of sheep were drowned.

And now, my dear reader, (if I ever have one,) I will come back to my narration of events which transpired on the Platts circuit. As my salary was insufficient, I had to resort to other things and concluded it would be a good plan to raise a colt or two. I had a splendid horse and decided to trade him for a mare. I was no horse trader either as you will see. One of my stewards had a little mare, a good traveler and young, and I traded him a fine horse for same with the understanding that if I found anything wrong with her he would take her back and give me my horse. This was fair enough. He guaranteed her to be perfectly sound.

I was forty miles from home and it took me all day and part of the night to make the trip. As it began to get dark I noticed the mare did not, or could not, stay in the road and I had some difficulty in getting home. The animal was blind or nearly so--moon blindness or something. But was I not sick of my trade! I had one blind horse already and did not

want another. When I got home my wife and children had gone to bed. How I hated to tell my wife what I had done and how I had been cheated out of my fine horse!

It was not prudent at this time for me to be away from home, but after talking the matter over with my wife we both concluded that I should take the mare back the next day and get my horse. It was decided that I would be back the following morning. This would necessitate my being on the road all day and night. About sundown I reached my destination and demanded of my steward my horse according to contract. He did not protest and without delay I started home. I intended to travel all night and stopped at Brother Cole's to get something to eat and feed my horse. It was dark, and the road ran through a stretch of country in which a lot of Negroes and white miners lived and long stretches without a single human habitation. I was a little afraid anyway and Brother and Sister Cole persuaded me to stay until morning. They had been my best friends and supporters. The next morning while talking over the affairs of the circuit Sister Cole said to me, "If I were you I would locate." I do not know how the subject came up. I was discouraged enough already and this coming from one who had stood with me and been one of the most loyal supporters of the church was a shock for which I was not prepared. It was an unexpected blow, and I went out in the back yard and found relief in a flood of tears. I cried like a hurt child. I was sure everything and everybody was against me.

To locate now was to give up all ambitions and all aspirations of being something and doing something in the church I loved. I should not have paid any attention to this remark, but I was tired from overwork and perhaps somewhat abnormal.

In the morning I went by where some carpenters were at work on the new parsonage. They informed me that Sister--- had died. She was a member of the church. If I could have done so it was my duty to visit the afflicted ones, but the condition of my own family made it imperative for me to go on home. At the same time I had no word from them and even had they wanted me to preach the funeral I could not have done so and been true to my family.

At the end of the year, so my presiding elder told me, there was complaint that I went trading horses and did not, or would not, attend the funeral of one of my members. Had it been true the complaint would have been justified. But it was not true. If this is all that will come against me in the judgment I shall not fear to meet it.

I have always tried to preach a whole gospel. I believed, and do yet, that there is an awful hell to which wicked men and women will go if they die in their sins. Religion is not a formal assent to a creed but a life begotten of the Holy Ghost and manifested in an enthusiastic endeavor to bring others to Christ. As stated these people were formal while I was intensely enthusiastic about eternal things. I preached against Sabbath desecration, divorce, covetousness, card playing, and many modern practices of society and suspect that my standard of right living was too high for them in their self-centeredness. I preached holiness without which none shall see the Lord. I may not have used diplomacy, but I wielded the sword



of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

This was the second circuit that I had traveled under Rev. H. Hanesworth as presiding elder.

#### THE RICHWOODS CIRCUIT

This was the same old circuit I was appointed to as a supply when my application for readmission the first time was rejected and to which I did not go. I suppose the conference intended for me to travel this circuit by appointing me the second time though it might have been done to favor me as it was within thirty miles of my home. This was a very poor circuit and it had, as I remember, literally starved out the preacher the previous year and he a single man with no one to take care of but himself. It embraced a large territory in parts of Washington, Crawford, and Dent Counties with twelve churches from ten to thirty miles apart. From where I lived it was thirty miles to the nearest appointment and between thirty and fifty to the farthest. The date of my appointment was 1894. My salary was assessed at two hundred and fifty dollars and I received, all told, one hundred and fifty one dollars.

The previous year I received less than two hundred and fifty dollars which would not support my family by half and now I must face another hard year. There lived on this circuit an old local preacher who was very popular among the people. And he was very careful to maintain this popularity. While he did not openly do anything or throw anything in the way of the circuit preacher yet he managed in many ways to keep himself prominent in the public eye. He was often silent when a word from him would have been helpful to his pastor. Still he was a good man and the kind of a preacher that suited the class of people living in those regions.

There was a wide difference between the people of this circuit and the people of the circuit I had served the previous year. They were poor in the goods of this world. Only a sense of my responsibility to God and the sacredness of my ordination vows linked with my great ambition to make good kept me from quitting the work. From what my presiding elder told me at the close of the year in regard to the people wanting a change I could not hope for a favorable report about me to the Bishop. My appointment to this charge was evidence that my conclusions were correct and I realized my future as a member of the conference depended in a great measure upon my success or failure in my work this year. If I failed I would be located at the next conference which almost happened as will be seen.

I threw every ounce of energy I had into the work. I almost forsook home, wife, and children, remaining away from them at one time in revival meetings six weeks. One church wanted for their preacher the brother referred to as being very popular with the people. It was a new point organized by him the year before. He was preaching for them monthly and did not stand aside in favor of the appointed pastor but was silent and seemed pleased that things were favorable to him. I think he even humored the

situation. I told them it was all right; that it was their privilege to withdraw from the church, which they had practically done, and I would report them as having done so at the next quarterly meeting. They yielded and I continued to preach for them until the mines at that place (Cherry Valley) were shut down and the people all moved away.

I held meetings at each point on the circuit and at conference reported thirty nine conversions and forty additions to the church. The conference collections were considerably behind. Brother Green was my presiding elder. At my last quarterly conference, held early in the quarter, I had only seven dollars on my conference claims and he asked how I took my collections and I told him. Then in a mocking way, talking through his nose, he asked me if I took them that way. I assured him that I did, talking through my nose as he had done to me in a mocking way. No one can ever in truth accuse me of talking in a nasal whang, but this time I did. I never could stand things like that without a feeling of indignation and resentment.

As he was to preach the next day we traveled together. On the way we had quite an argument as to the duties of trustees. I contended that the trustees were the custodians of the church houses holding them in trust for the ministry and membership of the church and if they opened them for anything except the worship of God they violated their trust. He said the preacher in charge controlled the churches in his circuit and could open or shut them to whom he pleased. I am sure he was wrong in this and our contention was sharp, but we did not "part asunder." But in the mind of my presiding elder this and what happened in the quarterly conference settled my destiny. I am almost sure he had made up his mind what he would do at the forth coming conference at Jackson.

An itinerant preacher's appointment is absolutely in the hands of his presiding elder. The above incidents correlated with what happened at conference when I made my report show that my surmises as to what the elder intended to do were not imaginary. He intended to ask for my location for inefficiency. I read my report and sat down. I had had thirty nine conversions and forty additions to the church, but the collections were far behind, but this was more than the average reported by the other preachers. At the conclusion of the reading of my report the Bishop, who had had several meetings of his cabinet where of course my case had come up for consideration, turned to my presiding elder and said, "Have you anything to say?", and Brother Green said he had nothing to say.

My character passed and I was appointed to the Pocahontas circuit with Brother N. B. Henry as my presiding elder. I had gone through another hard year receiving only one hundred and forty one dollars. Obligations had to be met with not a dollar in sight. Small wonder under such circumstances I was despondent and discouraged. I hold that it is a sublime faith and courage born of heaven that sustains one in such conditions. A man must be less than a man not to feel intensely when the welfare of his wife and children and his honesty and veracity are at stake. My home was mortgaged and I was otherwise burdened. So the future looked dark in the matter of my appointments. I could not expect any better of Brother Green

than the year before as I was sure he did not have a favorable impression as to my efficiency as a circuit rider.

Brother Henry was presiding elder of the Farmington district and I went over to one of his quarterly meetings to see what he could do for me in the way of an appointment. He had been helpful to me in getting my daughter in school at Caledonia when he was president of the conference school there. He gave me some encouragement, but, as I remember, did not promise anything special.

The conference was at Jackson in 1895. As before said I had a good report on everything except a deficit in the collections. In a letter received from Brother Henry after conference he said, "Do you know what Brother Green would have done with you?" This shows that he knew Brother Green's attitude toward me while my appointment was pending in the Bishop's cabinet. Putting this and my spat with Brother Green in the quarterly conference and on the road together the conclusion is evident that he decided on my location and only my very good report to the conference averted it.

Pocahontas circuit was in a splendid farming community in Cape Girardeau County, but most of our people were in moderate circumstances. It had a parsonage located near the largest congregation on the circuit. The chief reason I was appointed to this charge, I think, was because it was in the country and I had a large family. At first they gave me a rather cold reception. This, however, at only one or two points. The former pastor had been there three years and was very popular. He had been very successful in getting people into the church, and they wanted him back. During his pastorate revivals were continuous. He could adjust himself to any sort of a crowd, hence his popularity, especially with the outside bunch. I never could fawn and be conciliated by flattery. I never indulged in telling funny stories nor in trifling talk. I was always serious in the pulpit and enthusiastic in the presentation of the gospel. I had to work my way into the good graces of the people and in this I succeeded in a great measure and became quite as popular as the former pastor.

At first everywhere I went it was "Brother Cagle." I finally told them if I just had one of Brother Cagle's old shoes to wear around over the circuit I would be all right. Of course this was not the best thing for me or them. When I left a circuit I left it for good. I never kept up a correspondence with my former parishoners, nor did I go back to preach funerals and marry their young people.

During my three years on this circuit I preached three times on Sunday every two weeks. This was very hard on me. It was a six point circuit. My salary was three hundred dollars. The salary and what they paid was about the same each year. My first year in some things was very trying. They clung to their old pastor. They were slow to be reconciled to the change and he liked to have it so. Though he lived a hundred miles from there he kept up a correspondence with them and during the year made arrangements with them without consulting me to hold a protracted meeting at the most prominent point in the circuit.

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In numbering the document, 68 evidently was skipped.

I was kept in ignorance of the transaction until a short while before the meeting was to begin. They had planned for a big affair. Not only would the ex-pastor be present, but two prominent preachers from another conference. At the appointed time Brother Allen from Illinois came. He was a good man, I think, but nothing out of the ordinary as a preacher. He did not know that I had not been consulted but supposed he was present by arrangement with me. When informed it was arranged by the former pastor he stayed a few days and left. From the beginning, though, I attended every service, I kept hands off and let the brother have full swing, praying every time called upon to do so, but feeling all the time that I had been ignored and treated with disrespect. My people should have consulted me in the matter of holding a meeting at that time and as to who my helper should be. Then had they wanted the former pastor it would have been all right with me. No minister should think of holding a meeting on another minister's charge without a mutual agreement.

Brother C. held the meeting eight or ten days without much visible results. Of course, he expected to receive something for his labor. He had hired a livery rig in his home town to bring him and family and it cost him quite a little sum of money. He had anticipated a big time and looked for a corresponding remuneration, but at the close of the meeting the collection was only two dollars and fifty cents. I had maintained a silent and neutral attitude. It was not my meeting. He had come on his own option and at the solicitation of a few disgruntled members of the church and now let them pay him. I know they expected me to play in the closing scene. I did not appear in the act.

The last night of the meeting after preaching a real good sermon he sat down. The brethren looked around at me expecting that I would rise to the occasion and take a collection. I simply said, "If the brethren have any further matter they now have the opportunity to attend to it." Brother --- arose and stated that Brother C. had come all the way from Benton, Scott County, and had hired a rig and preached faithfully and now he would take a collection in his behalf. He did with the result already stated. A large crowd was present. I need not say whether I was ever troubled with that brother any more. Whether he got anything on the side I do not know. I think all or nearly all the worthwhile members of the church were with me.

There came a woman into the bounds of the circuit who claimed to heal all manner of diseases. She called herself "the Divine healer." She could talk glibly and sing well. She got into my churches without my knowing of it. There was not a church in my charge in which the trustees did not permit her to preach and that without my consent. She drew large crowds and had the altar filled with people seeking the "power." My Sunday school superintendent and stewards collected money to repair one of the churches so it would be comfortable. All things were ready. Her meeting was to start the next day. The parsonage was only a short distance from the church and yet, so secretly had they planned the whole affair, I knew nothing of what all this preparation was about. I had opposed her ever since she came into my circuit, hence this secrecy on the part of her friends.

I had notified her to keep out of my churches or I would prosecute her. This had the effect of shutting her out of two of my churches by the trustees. As soon as I learned of the meeting I locked up the church house and took charge of the key. I also notified her that she could not have the use of the church in which to hold a meeting and if she persisted I would prosecute her.

My procedure was considered high handed by some of the members. Others thought no harm would have come to the church had the meeting been held. Still others were silent and so the brunt fell on me. Things before this were not very encouraging. Quarterage had not been coming in very freely and now the outlook was dark. It looked as if the whole church would fall to pieces. At Rock Hill they were with me. Pocahontas was also loyal to the preacher, but Oak Hill had gone over to the "Divine healer," trustees and all. When the time came for me to preach at this point, after the services began, it was a common thing for one, two, three, or more people jump up, march around in the church looking up toward the ceiling with eyes wide open and seemingly fixed on some object unseen to others. This would continue indefinitely or until the service closed. Of course nothing could be accomplished by continuing the services under these conditions.

At the next quarterly conference I entered complaint against the trustees for violating their trust in permitting the churches to be opened otherwise than the law allowed. The conference deposed them and elected others in their place. The strife continued and I concluded it was useless to attempt anything further there. So I quit going and soon afterward the church was burned down, but I do not think it grew out of the trouble between the pastor and the "healer." It was probably caused by trouble which arose after I dropped the church from the plan of the circuit. The congregation fell out among themselves over the "healer." I do not know whether the house was ever rebuilt.

About this time things looked so unpromising that I concluded my wife had better take the boys and go back to the farm near Irondale while I and the girls should remain in the parsonage. This she did. It was a very unpleasant and inconvenient arrangement and with all a great hardship to all of us. I do not know how many trips I made to the farm and back to the circuit.

I served this circuit three years, in many ways very pleasant, and had many friends there when I left. I think I could have stayed the four years had I wanted to do so. Though I am recording the thorny side of my experiences along life's way the other side of it had more flowers than thorns. I suppose in all I received about three hundred dollars each of the three years. Quite a lot of it was in produce. I married a number of people but did not take many into the church.

It was accepted by the public generally that I was right in my opposition to the "healer." She proved to be of an unscrupulous and deceptive character. I fought her in the pulpit and in the press as the files of the Jackson Cash Book will show. Many of her adherents became my best friends. At the close of my three years I was sent to the York Chapel circuit.

## CHAPTER XXI

YORK CHAPEL--THE PARSONAGE--THE MEMBERSHIP  
A RESOLUTION TO BUILD A NEW CHURCH  
DOING SOME FARMING  
CHARLIE'S HEALTH--TAKEN TO ST. LOUIS--INCIDENTS OF THE TRIP  
MY MARE AND COLT STOLEN--CAMPMEETINGS--DR. BOUNDS

York chapel was a four-point circuit. There was a one-room parsonage with a leanto as a kitchen and dining room. Partitions had been run through the main building dividing it into three rooms. It had a fireplace. In this parsonage the preachers had lived for fifty years or more. In the past years this circuit had been one of the best in the conference. Now it was run down in membership by death and because the Catholics and Lutherans had come in and bought the farms owned by the Methodists.

The circuit had so declined it was very ordinary and my salary was three hundred and seventy five dollars. The first year I was there they paid three hundred thirty and the second year in full. The members were as fine as I would want to serve. Most of them were good livers, but none of them rich. They were loyal to their preacher and their church, though inclined to have their own way. They stood together on all issues coming before the church. They were silently indifferent to any measure. They were not contentious nor pugnacious. Hands off seemed to be their policy in matters not acceptable to them. They were sane and reasonable in their attitude toward all questions concerning the welfare of the church. Some of the finest families I have ever met lived in this charge. I should further say that they were conservative to their own hurt.

I saw that if things continued as they were, with the annual decrease by death and the encroachment of the foreign element on the native population, it would only be a matter of time when the circuit would be reduced to a mission. And that very thing has happened long since. For years (I cannot say how long) they held an annual campmeeting which was always a time of homecoming and the reunion of old friends. At my last quarterly meeting on this charge I offered a resolution to have the old stone church razed and build a new and more commodious one and ask the St. Louis conference Board of Missions to make this a great mission center with a settled pastorate, but they sat down on my motion to the extent that it was not even seconded. Most all the people who composed the congregation at that time are gone to their long home.

I cannot see the wisdom in sending missionaries to convert the Catholics in other lands and neglect them at home. But that is the way Protestants are doing. While on this circuit I kept my cows and bought another horse. Thus I was prepared to do a little farm work. This was an unusual practice for the preacher. I moved my chicken, ducks, and wife and children to the

circuit. It was a country circuit, had a country parsonage and I had a country family, so it fit all around. The church at York Chapel owned fifty acres of land ten of which was cleared and fenced. I put this in corn and raised a good crop. The second year I was there I also had a crop planted on my little farm at Irondale and cultivated by my two oldest boys, their sister keeping house for them. This arrangement seemed a necessity in order to provide for my family.

Charley and Ada, my two oldest children, were in poor health and the parsonage being so small and poorly ventilated aggravated their trouble and probably hastened their premature death. It became necessary for me to take Charley to St. Louis for treatment and we went via Perryville and Chester, Illinois, boarding a train on the I. C. on the east side of the river. The train was many hours late and instead of getting into St. Louis early in the day it was midnight. Having to go to the Southern part of the city where my sister lived, and knowing nothing of the city, we were at the end of our wits how to get there. Charley was sick, and I was so nervous and excited I could not find my way anywhere. He proved himself the same self-reliant boy he had always been and we finally got to our destination. But our trip was in vain--the physician said there was nothing that could be done for him.

On our return trip the train from West Chester to Perryville had been derailed and it was midnight when we got to Perryville. We should have arrived there at six p. m. The oldest boy at home met us. He hitched the horses and went to the station when the train was due. In the mean time a terrific snow storm came up and by midnight the snow was about four inches deep. When the train finally pulled in we went to where the team had been hitched but they were gone. After quite a while we found their tracks and following them we came to a livery stable where they had been taken by the marshall. After some parley he let me have the team by paying fifty cents. With a sick boy and but little change in my pocket this was annoying in the extreme. Besides they accused my little boy of being drunk which was a base lie. He might have gone to sleep while waiting at the station, but he was not drunk. What boy would not have gotten sleepy in a tobacco stench railroad depot waiting six hours for a belated train?

It was in the old days of the saloon and I had been fighting them ever since I had been in the county.

#### A MIDNIGHT HORSE CHASE

An exciting incident occurred while on this circuit. One night along about midnight I heard one of my horses neighing. I went to the lot and my mare and colt were gone. A young man who had been to see his girl came by and I asked him if he had seen them. He said he had just met a man on a horse with a colt following. I jumped on my other horse without a saddle or blanket and started in pursuit. I had not gone far until I met a Negro boy and he said he had just met a man horseback and a colt following. I asked him to go with me to which he readily consented and away we went. As we passed through Longtown the clatter of the horses' feet could be



heard quite a distance. About a mile below town the colored boy gave me a signal. He saw the thief just to one side of the road where an old trail left the main highway. We had gained on the thief so that he was compelled to dodge us or be caught. He had turned into this old road and thrown the bridle rein over a fence post evidently thinking we would pass by without seeing him and he would come back and get the mare. I would have passed without seeing her if the Negro had not been with me. I had no arms of any kind, not even a pocket knife, but had I been by myself and overtaken that thief I would have undertaken to pull him off my mare without hesitancy or fear. I shall always have a warm place in my heart for that Negro boy.

The campmeetings at old York Chapel were times when some noted preacher would be selected to conduct the meeting or at least do the preaching. The last year I was on the charge I had Dr. Bounds, a noted Southern divine, with me. During the ten days I never heard such close gospel preaching. When it came to deep analytical exposition of the gospel he had no peer. He was profoundly spiritual and between services spent most of the time in agonizing prayer.

One day of the meeting was set apart for children services. The children were baptized and any who wanted to join the church were received. There were few young people in the community who did not belong to the church. This was the result of special care and pious training. Dr. Bounds held that the gospel was for all alike. I was so anxious for the campmeeting to succeed that I spent much time in fasting and prayer. Some days I ate no food and spent the time in secret prayer.

From the start I saw that the preaching was not giving satisfaction and that things were dying. I conducted the prayer service at nine o'clock each day. Taking these people all around I think they were as devoted people as I ever met and yet in most of Dr. Bounds' sermons he declared that the church there was not spiritual and that they had not received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That, in his opinion, was why the meeting was not succeeding. One Sunday the preacher told me I would not let the meeting succeed; in substance, that I was in the way because I kept telling people they were good when they were not. And this after I had spent so much time in fasting and prayer for the success of the meeting. It was a sore thrust and hurt. Brother Lord, who was present most of the time, was of the same opinion as Dr. Bounds.

I told them they (the preachers) claimed to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and if that was the qualification for winning souls it looked to me like they ought to be winning souls. I said, "You have not had a single conversion," and added, "If one can chase a thousand, two ought to put ten thousand to flight." He (Bounds) said I put him in mind of a little boy going through a grave yard whistling to keep up his courage.

I think this meeting was the most unsatisfactory of any that had been held at old York Chapel. At the same time I doubt whether they had ever had such clearcut Bible doctrine preached to them by any other preacher in the past. They paid him some over six dollars for ten days which was not enough. He was a great preacher and a holy man of God now gone to his blessed reward.

## CHAPTER XXII

BELLVIEW CIRCUIT--BELLVIEW VALLEY  
MY FIRST YEAR  
DEATH OF CHARLIE AND ADA, OUR FIRST BORN  
ALSO THE DEATH OF LITTLE RAY, OUR LAST BORN  
BACK TO THE FARM--SICKNESS--AN INCIDENT  
BROTHERS BERRYMAN AND J. R. A. VAUGHAN--ONE MAN RULE

From York Chapel I was appointed to the Bellview charge which had four churches and was part of one of the oldest and largest circuits in the conference. Formerly it embraced a large territory, but as the church increased and new towns sprang up other circuits and stations were formed out of it. Even when I joined the conference it was much smaller than it had been and was considered a good circuit financially. In my ministry I would have been elated at being appointed its pastor. But it had gradually declined until it paid only three hundred dollars salary. I concluded that after it had run down so I suppose it was thought proper to send me to it. Fact is I was pleased to get it.

In the Bellview Valley my wife was born and reared and a number of her relatives still lived in the bounds of the circuit. Then it was not far from my little farm on Big River and I could see after it. This was fortunate for me in one way and in another it was not. As it had often happened the circuit did not pay me a living and I had to supplement my salary by doing other kind of work in addition to my preaching. I still had my cows and as I had done on my last charge I took them with me to the parsonage. My boys were now able to do a lot of work, so we rented some ground and cultivated ten or twelve acres of corn. We put up hay on the shares and with what the circuit paid we managed to get along.

It is better for a preacher to work at something than to go destitute. But if a minister is compelled to work to supplement his salary he had better go away from where the parsonage is located as this will save him much humiliation arising from the fact of a sense of poverty and the loss of dignity in the eyes of those whose pastors do not have to do these things. I have often felt intense humiliation in the realization of how differently other people fared as compared to myself and mine in the comforts of life. We cut and hauled our own wood. The timber was given to us and we only had to chop and haul it.

During most of the first year on this circuit we remained on the farm because of the illness of Charlie who was growing worse each day. He suffered much. Poor boy! Words fail to express the pain and anguish of my heart as I watched him day by day dying by the inches as his life slowly ebbed away. By and by he ceased to suffer and went to the many-mansioned house on high. He was a good boy and belonged to the church.

When called upon he would pray in public. I shall see him soon. It is a glorious hope. Life would not be worth living were there no Saviour and no future life. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

After Charlie died we moved to the parsonage. Ada, our first born, had been sick a year or more but seemingly was some better. Symptoms now seemed to indicate that the change was only temporary. She grew worse daily and it was not long till the end came and we laid her away in the new part of the old cemetery north of Caledonia. She was gentle, lovely, kind, and obedient.

#### NOVEMBER 1927

After a lapse of five or six years I take my pen to continue these reminiscences of my itinerant life. If I live until December I shall be seventy nine years of age.

More about Ada. She was a patient sufferer, guileless as a babe, trustful and of a radiant disposition. She felt keenly, but without murmuring, the pangs of poverty hardships. "The hurt was in silence borne." She once had a sweetheart, a decent young man, but the tongue of slander parted them asunder and the wound in her heart would not heal. It was the venom of the viper injected into the heart of innocence. One day a young fellow named Hatcher kept up a disturbance during the preaching service by talking, and I rebuked him and to spite me he lied on my precious child. May the Lord reward him according to his deeds!

We have her picture hanging on the wall of our home and turn any way you will she is always looking at you. I have had many hours of sad retrospection as I recall the days of her childhood and young womanhood. I could have seen things different in her life had I done different, but it is now too late for regrets. She is not dead. She lives, she knows, she feels. It is a blessed hope: "There is no death." She did not die.

#### LITTLE RAY

Another great affliction came to us while on the Bellview circuit. Our little Ray six years old, our last born, died on his birth day. He was bright and full of life. I have not the least doubt but for the perfidy of our family physician he would now in all probability be living. He had something like the diphtheria but was seemingly better when I started to conference. I returned after an absence of several days and found him not much improved, if any, and there were indications of swelling in his throat. I asked the doctor if a poultice of some kind would be good. He said it would not. I remarked that it might reduce the swelling. He flew into a great rage and ordered me out of his office. Instead of waiting until his rage abated and he had gotten in a better humor, I just went and called another doctor and he let my little boy die.

Of all the hard things I have ever been called upon to do was the forgiving of that doctor for becoming angry at me for no good reason when he might have saved my little boy's life. I have always believed that had he continued his treatment of him he would have cured him. I am not sure that I have yet forgiven him from my heart as I must if I am to be forgiven of my heavenly Father. We laid our precious boy beside his brother and sister in the old Caledonia cemetery.

Thus in a little more than a year we buried three of our dear children. I had to be almost their only spiritual advisor and comforter in their suffering and in their departure. There were not many flowers, but I have had a greater love for flowers since those few were laid on the graves of my precious children by kind friends and neighbors.

In all of our afflictions not one letter or card of condolence came to us. Only a short notice of the death of our dear children appeared in the church paper, and that was furnished by myself. But none of this apparent lack of interest in me and mine by my brethren and friends ever disturbed me for I was conscious of the presence of a friend that "Stic-eth closer than a brother." I had His sympathy and words of comfort, and that was worth more to me than all earthly friendships. I refer to these things to show how are cast and respect to persons as manifested even in the church which is supposed to be without "spot or wrinkle or any such thing." I have observed in many instances when preachers of a certain rank or any member of their family it was given great publicity in the church papers whereas little was said of the death of ministers and their loved ones not so well known.

I am sure some will say. "Oh, these are small matters and only over-sensitive people notice them." Maybe so, but there are many people in this old world who feel intensely when overtaken by affliction and no one seems to care. There is no respecter of persons with God. All are in His care and on an equality. I am not oblivious to the fact that I am pleased when noticed by my superiors, but have schooled myself not to be elated when I am praised not cast down when not treated as I think I deserve.

I have tried to live up to the precept not to think more highly of myself that I ought to think and to esteem others better than myself. I am sure God will give me my place and all that I deserve in that day when He shall give to every man according to his works.

The last of the three years I was on the Bellview circuit we moved back to the farm which was about twelve miles from the parsonage. One church was four miles from our home and the farthest fifteen. I did not have to travel any more miles that I did when I lived at Bellview. I thought I should have received the rent from the parsonage but the stewards thought I was not entitled to it. There was no friction however.

At the close of the second year, or during the latter part of it, my wife, myself and three of the children were stricken with typhoid fever. My case was the most stubborn and I was in bed ten weeks. The

others were not down so long. I was not able to attend conference. Have never recovered entirely from that sickness. I got out too soon and one day, while walking around, my legs began to tingle and I felt a numbness in them. It has been present these twenty five years. Some days I do not feel it and then again it is worse. I have suffered with cold feet in winter. When I walk I have the feeling that I am walking on something soft.

With what the boys made on the farm and what I received from the circuit we lived fairly well. I think they paid me about two hundred dollars each year, maybe a little more.

At the fourth quarterly conference of my third year an incident occurred which shows what comes to a preacher sometimes no difference how faithfully and well he has done his work. Brother Berryman told the presiding elder, the Rev. J. R. A. Vaughan, that a change of preachers was necessary. His complaint was that I did not encourage the Sunday School of which he was superintendent. My method was to let each department of the church be managed by its own board--the pastor has his work, the superintendent of the Sunday School his, and so with the trustees and stewards. Each department has its specific work without interference by the pastor as long as it is conducted according to the law of the church.

The pastor should not take the teacher's place who is supposed to have specially prepared himself to teach his class. It is not best for either pastor nor visitor to take his place. I only came to this particular place once a month and sometimes the superintendent (Brother Berryman) would ask me to throw the Sunday School into one class and teach it and this I invariably refused to do. The pastor is overseer of the church and as such I did watch over all its departments. At this church I saw nothing wrong with the management of the Sunday School. The superintendent did his work well and the school was growing in interest.

My refusal to teach in the Sunday School was my offense. I said to Brother Berryman, "You did not treat me right in what you said to the presiding elder," and he replied that he did not mean any harm by it. I said, "What does language mean if your statement did not mean I had failed to do my work as it should have been done?" When my elder came back from the Springs, Brother B. told him I was hurt over what he had said. Then he said to me, "Oh, Brother Berryman did not mean any harm in what he said, namely that a change of preachers was indeed a necessity" and also that I had not encouraged the Sunday School.

It was a misrepresentation of my work. The Sunday School was the best in the circuit and had grown from a dwindling few to a thrifty school. The general testimony was that it was far better than when I took charge of the work. That one complaint was the cause of my removal from the circuit. One man rule again.

I should have remained another year--at least I was entitled to something as good or better but instead was sent to a mission formed the previous year. Thus was I moved by the dictation of one man. The incident is vivid in my memory because of the hurt of being misrepresented.

## CHAPTER XXIII

WHITEWATER MISSION  
BROTHER AND SISTER SLAGLE--LAFLIN--AN INCIDENT  
FRED CLIPPARD--THE CATHOLICS  
ANOTHER INCIDENT--MARBLE HILL CIRCUIT  
WIFE AND FOUR CHILDREN IN PARSONAGE  
WALKING INSTEAD OF RIDING THE CIRCUIT--DR. CHAPMAN  
MOVED AGAIN--NO GOOD REASON--FAMILY BACK TO FARM  
AN INTUITION--AT THE CONFERENCE

I went from Bellview to Whitewater mission. Whitewater was then a small village on the Missouri Pacific (Belmont Branch) and the church there the headquarters of the mission. Laflin, also on the railroad, had only a small congregation. The Whitewater church was chiefly supported by one man, Brother Slagle, a merchant. When I preached at this place I made his house my home. His wife was a noble woman and they treated me with the utmost kindness. Had it not been for them and their generous financial and moral support, especially in view of the fact that very few homes were open to the preacher, it would have been nearly impossible for me to remain on the work. The congregation, though not large, increased somewhat during the year.

There were four organized churches and three preaching places without organizations. Laflin was a small village, the church weak in membership and more so spiritually. I shall never forget my first visit to this town. It was one Sunday evening after preaching four miles out in the country. I had been directed to Fred Clippard, a steward and leading man in the church. As I came into the town I met a young man and asked him if he could tell me where Brother Clippard lived. He pointed to his house but remarked that he was not at home. Somehow I was impressed that he was not telling me the truth, but as I did not know where else to go I went on anyway and Brother Clippard met me at the door with a grin. They had seen me coming and sent this young man to meet me and inform me that they were not at home. (This is only a surmise on my part.) He became one of my staunchest friends.

The Catholics have a flourishing colony about four miles south of Laflin where they annually have a great gathering or picnic--a great affair. The attendance runs up into the thousands and they reap an abundant financial harvest. They have all kinds of sports and entertainment.

This year was a hard one for me. I did not accomplish much. The preacher who followed me was quite successful in building up the church both financially and spiritually. It is now a good charge and supports its preacher fairly well. I received a hundred dollars from the Board of Missions and about one hundred and fifty from the circuit. As already

stated there were very few homes open to the preacher. I often stood around after preaching waiting for some one to invite me to go home with them. Sometimes I was compelled to intrude myself on them or accept a belated invitation. I visited families where my reception was so cold that I felt I was an unwelcome visitor.

Once I stayed with a family all night where they were very poor, but kind and generous. I knew I was welcome and would be given the best they had. I was afflicted with boils so that I could scarcely lie down on a soft bed. The one they put me on was just a thin straw bed. It must have been the bed on which the father and mother slept. My boils hurt me so I could not sleep and along in the night I heard the man's wife say, "Oh, I am so tired." I do not know what kind of a bed they had, but am sure they had given their bed to me.

Another time I went with a family, members of my church who were very poor, and with their poverty the tongue of the tale bearer had been wagging. So far as I knew they were trying to live right. That night I slept on a small cot, but my staying all night with this family created a sensation, which, however, soon blew over. I usually landed in Laflin, if the train was on time, about four in the afternoon. The first two or three times I stood around waiting for an invitation from someone until I got tired of this sort of thing and secured a room at a boarding house which I was to occupy each month or as often as I desired.

An accident occurred while on this circuit that lingers fresh in my memory. Dongola, a little place consisting of a post office, a store, and a farm house, was fourteen miles from Whitewater. My first visit there I held a two days' meeting which from that start promised splendid results. At the first invitation for penitence, several came to the altar for prayers. I felt I should stay longer but could not. One morning, after leaving the house where I had stayed all night, I missed my watch that I prized very highly. After a search of the room where I had slept no trace of it could be found. The bed had been made. Finally the good woman of the house turned up one of the quilts and there was my watch. It had been hidden by whoever made up the bed. It had cost me a dollar to come and I gave the mail man a dollar to let me ride with him to the railroad. I got nothing for my visit to this church and never went back again.

#### MARBLE HILL CIRCUIT

My next appointment was to Marble Hill, a circuit of six organized churches, two ten miles from the parsonage, another six, one four, and the other near my home. I had no horse and walked to my appointments. It was a poor circuit and I had always had a dread of being sent to it. I moved my family to the parsonage--wife and four children--the older children being old enough to do for themselves. I am writing from memory and cannot give exact amount which I received, but it was not much more than two hundred dollars. We got along very well all things considered. We had no sickness and no mishaps of any kind, and as our

children were in school and no rent to pay we did quite well. At the end of the year we owed no man anything, and I had five dollars cash to my credit to move to the next circuit. An itinerant preacher meets with many adverse circumstances. He is subject to his superiors who are often his inferiors.

My presiding elder was a good man but had no executive ability whatever. He could not preside efficiently over any kind of an assembly but he was a gentleman after the Chesterfieldian order, clean and guileless as a child. He was high caste in the true sense of that term. In his position as a churchman he must be served. He expected those under him to prepare the way for him to get to his quarterly meetings, and if they did not, he would not go. I had no conveyance of any kind to get over my circuit, and was therefore ill prepared to ways and means for others. I had to walk to my preaching points and could not, and would not, hire a conveyance for my presiding elder. I think I have been made to suffer because of my stand on these things. Of course such things go to the Bishop's cabinet and become factors in the assignment of the preachers for another year.

At any rate, whether these things had anything to do with it or not, at the end of the year I had to move, and, as usual, to a charge no better--if anything, worse. There was no reason for my removal. If there were any complaints on the part of the people I never heard of them. We were very well situated, our children were in school, and it was costly to move, therefore, I saw no reason why I should not have stayed at least another year. From what transpired at conference I am satisfied I was moved to make room for another, I suppose, on the basis of the unworthiness of one preacher and the worthiness of another preacher.

As I saw it there was nothing left for me to do but to move my family back to the farm. I had to do as I had often done--resort to this expedient in order that my family might be the better provided for. There was no parsonage on the circuit to which I was sent, and, judging by what the charge had paid the preacher the year before, I would not receive enough, barring the expense of moving and house rent, to meet the necessities of my family. Considering these things I thought it best not to take my family to the circuit, and as I held a half fare clergy permit the cost of going to and from my appointments would not be very much. When I went to conference I had no intimation that I was going to be moved. During the sessions I was restless and down hearted. Somehow I felt that things were not going to suit me. One evening I felt that my appointment was fixed and something said to me, "Join the other church," (the Methodist Episcopal.)

This was as plain to me as if someone had spoken to me in an audible voice, but I had been in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, all my life and could not easily sever my relations to it. I could have asked the conference for a location in order to join the Methodist Episcopal Church, which would have been granted. This would have been the only honorable way.



## CHAPTER XXIV

## DIELSTADT CIRCUIT

It was situated in Scott and Mississippi Counties and composed of five churches. Dielstadt was on the Belmont Branch of the Missouri Pacific and headquarters of the circuit. The distances to the several churches were twelve, ten, six, and three miles. I usually walked to my appointments. The circuit was a new work--the third year of its existence--formed out of three old dying rural churches and two weak new points. It was a fine farming section--watermelons, alfalfa, wheat, and peas were raised in abundance, but the country was cursed with land lordism. Just a few men living in the cities and towns owned this fair land.

The farming was done by tenants who either paid money rent or worked on the shares. Most of the farms had good barns, but as a rule the tenant houses were poor and some of them mere shacks. The tenant population was transient. Under such conditions there could not be much community interest. There was no future for them. It was a year at a time. And they had no conveniences. They could not afford at their own expenses to create them and the land holder was slow to make them. The schools were poor and the churches, when there were any, were attended by only a few people. Often at my Sunday morning services there would be only seven or eight present. It was the case with the preachers who preceded me. I suppose that lower down in this garden spot of Missouri the attendance at church was better.

I preached at Haw's Chapel on Big Lake every month for a year and perhaps not over twenty five persons were present at any one service. Only seven members of this church but they were loyal to the core. Their church house was old--perhaps the oldest in the country and probably named after one of the old preachers, Dr. Haw, grandfather of M. T. Haw, now pastor of one of our churches in Kansas City. I suppose that in times past this community was prominent as a religious center where people for miles around came together for worship. This church of seven members paid eighty dollars for the imperfect service I gave them. I walked to this place either from Dielstadt or Charleston each month. From the former it is ten or twelve miles and from the latter, six or seven. There was another old church on this circuit near Price Landing on the Mississippi River called Lusk's Chapel.

The congregation at this place was somewhat larger than at Haw's Chapel, but they did not pay as much. When I was in that a community I always stopped with Life Brown. He and wife were as fine people as can be found in any land under the sun. Sister Brown was exceptionally fine, very intelligent and refined. They were to me as a father and mother.

I shall never forget our first meeting when cold and nearly frozen I came to their door and received a warm welcome. I shall never forget the big fireplace with its blazing fire and the warmth and comfort that were mine as I sat and warmed myself after walking for ten miles in a cold blistering winter wind through lanes that seemed to have no end and no tree or hill to break its force. Only fields and lanes seemingly without end.

I shall now relate an incident which occurred just before coming to the home of Brother and Sister Brown. As before stated there seemed to be no end to the lanes as I struggled on through the biting cold wind. I thought I would never get there. Finally I came to a farm house and asked if that was where Mr. Life Brown lived. When informed that it was I went into the house without much ceremony, sat down, pulled off my overshoes and began to prepare to stay but was told that this was not the Life Brown I was trying to find. As it was my first visit to the community and I did not know anyone there was nothing to do but to face the bitter wind another mile or more. Finally I came to the Brown home where I found a royal welcome and shelter; where I afterward spent many days and nights and where a friendship was formed which has continued and will last through time and eternity.

But I did not like this circuit and could not, or did not, put any heart in my work. It seemed that the hospitality of the people was grudgingly bestowed. They were slow to invite the preacher into their homes of which only a few were opened to him. Not only was this true in my case but it was true, I learned, of the preachers who traveled the work before me. It was in my mind to quit even if I did lose my relation to the conference and forfeit all the rights that might in the future come to me for old age and disability. Thus I was halting between a course of self-denial and sacrifice and the one that would sever my relation with my conference and turn me to some other occupation.

I wrote my presiding elder that I was quitting the circuit but before I heard from him, and before he had time to supply the work, I met Bishop Hendrix and asked him to release me and appoint me as junior preacher on the Bismarck circuit without salary, which he refused to do. So I continued on this circuit until the end of the year but without much success. I held a few short meetings and took several people into the church, receiving something over two hundred dollars. I cannot give the exact figures as I do not have the conference minutes.

I was appointed to the Irondale and Mineral Point circuit, a five point work. Rock Springs and Hazel Glen were rural churches, the other three small village churches on the Missouri Pacific, Irondale being the largest and the headquarters of the circuit. The latter was my home town and close to the old farm on which I was born and reared. Noted preachers in the past had traveled over this territory and ministered to the people in spiritual things. Potosi, county seat of Washington County, and one of the oldest towns in the state, once entertained an annual conference. Tradition says it lacked only one vote of being the capital of the state. Caledonia entertained an annual conference in the early seventies and was the seat of the Bellview Collegiate Institute before its removal to Fredericktown.

What was once a large circuit has been divided and subdivided and made into a number of circuits and stations. I was glad and felt honored in being appointed to this work. I am sure the conference was trying to do the best they could for me by giving me this circuit. I had a chance to make good. Had I given my whole time to the work it would have been much better for me and for the charge. There was no parsonage, and I lived on my little farm. In connection with my pastoral duties I worked on the farm and the result was that I failed to a certain extent in both jobs.

While on this circuit a Baptist preacher came to Irondale to hold a meeting. They had no house of their own nor any organization. The trustees of the Methodist gave him permission to hold his meeting in my church without consulting me. The meeting was quite a success and a Baptist church was organized in the Methodist church. The Baptists, of course, were not in agreement with us as to certain doctrines and pages and some leading members of the Methodist church sent me word to come in as the preacher was stealing, or would steal, my sheep. But they had let him in the church without consulting me, and I sent them word that as I had not let the bear in, I would not turn him out. In answer to some criticism of my attitude I told them if they thought it good policy to let a preacher into the church who opposed my preaching and practice they would have to make the best of it.

I have always been willing and ready to cooperate with other denominations in any good work so long as they were willing to extend to me that charity and courtesy due a fellow minister. In the years gone, and even now, Baptist preachers or most of them were very intollerant on the question of the subject and mode of Baptism. It was always to the fore in their preaching. They are somewhat more tolerant now. I did not object to his holding the meeting in my church but he should have consulted the pastor in the matter. I was ignorant of the whole proceedings until the meeting had been going for some time. They (the Baptists) now have a church at Irondale with a small membership as the result of that meeting. The cause of Christianity in this town and everywhere has been greatly hindered by the multiplicity of churches. There are four denominations organized in this town and none of them able to support a pastor full time or even half time. Put them all together and they could have a pastor full time and pay him well. At present not one of them is doing much--just struggling along with but little life.

At this time the doctrine of a second work of grace was persistently brought into the church by certain preachers and evangelists. This was another thing that opperated against me and made my work almost a failure or at least militated against any great success. It was the habit of those who were sanctified or had received the "second blessing" to proclaim it from the house tops and to confess it on every occasion regardless of the feelings of their friends and brethren who differed with them in regard to this doctrine.

I must say this much for them: While they may not have had a "zeal according to knowledge" they did have a real experience of sins forgiven

and they said so, which is the normal state of every one confessing godliness in truth and sincerity.

Others in the church could and did say the same thing though they were not so loud and demonstrative in their religion. These were the mainstay of the church financially while the other class did not add much to the church in the way of finances. The former may have been a little too formal in the religious life, but they were good men and women and stood for the worthwhile things of the kingdom. Many of them had seen their loved ones go out of this life bearing witness to the saving and sustaining grace of Jesus Christ and resented the teaching that consigned them to eternal damnation. The second blessing folks contended that if a person did not get the second blessing and get it in a certain way he was lost. They went to still further extremes, declaring that the church was corrupt and its ministers "money mongers, "men pleasers," and "time servers".

This was not pleasing to the pastors of the church. The people having to listen to it at all time it became a source of strife and bad feeling and an attempt was made to expell a prominent member, a local preacher, who had professed the second blessing and who persisted in denouncing the ministry of the church. It was in the midst of these things that I was appointed to the charge. Brother Linza was a good man and a true Christian, but he was a confirmed pessimist. He saw no good in things about him. At a district conference his case came up and I thought they were going to prefer charges against him. I said, "If I were his pastor I could get along with him". The matter was dropped, but at the next annual conference I was appointed to Irondale and became his pastor.

As the strife did not abate, and no sign of it doing so, I advised him to withdraw from the church. I felt that if I were in his place I would not stay in a church if its members did not want me. He mistook my meaning. He thought I wanted him to withdraw and he did. His family and a few others went with him and he joined the Nazerine church. They have not made much progress and neither has the church he left. Since then the Methodist church has steadily declined both in membership and effectiveness.

Both sides were wrong. The chief cause of the decline of the Methodist church was death. A year or so after my pastorate a meeting was held in which several people were converted and joined the church and for some years it was quite active especially among the young people. An Epworth League was organized and beautiful memorial windows put in the church building which cost quite a sum of money. One window was in memory of a man, as I understand, who was living in adultery at the time of his death.

The man had married a very fine girl. After one child came to their home they separated. It was not long thereafter until he was married again to Miss ---, a member of a prominent family in town. They had quite a large family and were members of the Presbyterian church, but

after the death of his second wife he joined the Methodists and was a steward until the time of his death. By giving a certain sum to the church, a memorial window was put in the church for him and his wife.

Another window was in memory of a man prominent in business and a member of one of the old families of the country. He was wealthy and reared a splendid family of girls. He did not belong to any church and loved strong drink. I think he had his portion of it each day. He was a drunkard though he never got down. He was the worst to himself. His wife was a noble, good woman, and a member of the church. A memorial window for her was proper and right, but he was not entitled to one.

There never has been a genuine revival in this church since those windows were put in. The other memorial windows are in memory of good and true men and women worthy of such honor.

At this time none of the churches--Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Nazarine--are doing anything except keeping up their stated services and running small Sunday schools. Anything that divides the forces of Christianity is a great sin if such divisions are essentially one in agreement and doctrine and policy. There is no serious difference in doctrines of the Methodist church and that of the Nazarines. They agree in every vital teaching of Christ and the Apostles. In fact the Nazarines boast that most all of their leading men came from the Methodist church.

Members of the Presbyterian church at Irondale are those who formerly belonged to the Methodist Episcopal church or those who were reared in the Methodist church, and there are no good reasons why they should not be in the Methodist church. The Southern Methodists have a substantial building. If they were all in one church they could support a strong man as pastor and have preaching each Sabbath. As previously said nothing much is being accomplished by the churches in this place. I often wonder what the preachers who encourage such divisions in the ranks of the Christian church will say in defense of their course when they face the eternal verities and "know even as they also are known". The brother referred to died the other day, November 11, 1927, and I wonder how he sees it now. He was a good man, but, as I see it, unwise in what he did. He largely wasted twelve or fifteen years of his life.

## CHAPTER XXV

CHURCH UNION--DIVISIONS NOT OF DIVINE PLAN  
 OUR LORD'S PRAYER REALIZED  
 CHRISTIAN UNITY A FACT  
 AN IMPOSSIBLE CONSUMMATION--A MODERN INNOVATION  
 AN INCIDENT--ANOTHER INCIDENT  
 REV. JOSEPH JAMISON--HELPLESS VICTIM--MY PRESIDING ELDER

Much is being said and written regarding the union of all denominations. As evidence of the righteousness of their contention they quote the Saviour's words, "That they might be one". But Jesus did not have in mind denominationalism at all. These divisions were not in his plan for the conquest of the world. Christians are one in him in all lands, of all races, and in all ages. He knew divisions would come, but they were not in his mind when he uttered these words.

The Jews were God's chosen people. He had been dealing with the rest of mankind through them. They were the children of the kingdom, his sheep. As they saw it, there were no other sheep. But Jesus said, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold which I must bring in that there may be one fold and one Shepherd". Jesus meant that his death would atone for the sins of all people, Gentiles as well as the Jews. This flowing together of Jew and Gentile is the mystery of "Christ in you the hope of glory" of which Paul speaks. (Col. 1:27)

This talk of one great human organization in one great church is a Utopian dream, an impossible consummation, because of the diversity of opinions due to a diversity of intellects and the inequality of training. All these make a union of all the denominations into one organic body an utter impossibility unless the time comes (and it seems to be here) when orthodox Christians stultify themselves by joining a creedless organization.

After two thousand years the union for which Jesus prayed, if it be organic union of the denominations, is further from being consummated and the cleavage gets wider and wider as the ages roll on. Sects are increasing constantly and will continue to increase unless in some unaccountable way this conglomeration of ignorance and prejudice is swept away.

Another observation: In this twentieth century which boasts of its schools, of its advancement in science, of its wonderful achievements in bringing to light the dark things of the past and of its superiority over any period of the world's history, with its "new day," "new thinking," and "new truths," there are more sects, more new cults, more controversy over theological questions never before disputed, than ever. The divergence between denominations, notwithstanding the boast in many quarters that the churches are coming together, is greater than ever before.

The truth is that our Lord's prayer has been answered. It was answered when the partition wall between Jew and Gentile was broken down. It was fulfilled when Jesus said, "It is finished," when the "veil of the temple was rent in twain," and when the door of salvation was swung wide wide open to every nation, tongue and people so that all might be one in Christ Jesus. Hence Christians should work together though they differ as to certain doctrines and administrations. And invariably this is so where the spirit of Christ controls the actions of men and women. Something is wrong with people who cannot worship with people whose lives show forth the spirit of Christ even though they may belong to a different denomination. This modern effort to merge all denominations into one universal human organization is a project without reason, an impossible consummation.

I was in charge of this circuit (Irondale) for two years. I was born and reared in this community and was, according to the words of Jesus, "without honor in my own country". It was not that they did not have confidence in my piety, but I was common--just John Robinson's son. It is a strange thing that a strange preacher coming into a community, though he may be inferior to those born and reared there, will command the respect of the people and have greater success and a greater following and be more popular than the home preacher. That this is true is proven by experience and observation. Being a home product it was very risky for me to say certain things from the pulpit, but a stranger could say them with perfect freedom and without giving offense.

In the former days the organ and the choir were not a necessity, but now they are it seems. Often the services are held up because the organist is late or some member of the choir is not on hand. Then much of the preacher's time is taken by the choir in their select songs and solos. It is a modern innovation and often impairs the services that follow. This should certainly be remedied or entirely eliminated. The song service is a vital part of the worship and should be conducted in a most solemn and sacred manner, but it is often performed without any show of reverence or spirituality. The singing should be with the spirit and with the understanding also. It is a travesty on Christianity for those who lead in the song service to be as is often the case--worldly minded and outbreking sinners. They should be as holy as the minister who stands in the holy place and dispenses the word of God.

Often there are people in the choir notorious for their impurity and immoral character. I never could have any patience with a late organist or a giggling choir nor stand for the sacred song service to be turned over to people vicious and unholy in their lives. I had to change it or be changed--usually the latter happened.

At one of my preaching places on this circuit the organist, a prominent woman who belonged to a prominent family in the community, was notoriously impure according to reports. One Sunday morning in my sermon I said: "there are men and women in our church choirs who are as black as the pit". I spoke of the church at large and did not have reference to any particular place or to any individual case. The shoe fit. When the time came for me to preach there again only a few were present. Being early I found Sister E. already there. Somehow I felt that something was

wrong and in conversation with Sister E. she told me I had given great offense the month before; that Mr. --- who was not a member of the church but one of the "big shots" ruling the community had tried to get the girls to rotten egg me the next time I came. I suppose they did not listen to him as they were not on hand.

Sister E. said I had better ring the church bell so the people would know I was there. I had not been ringing the bell and said no. It was not my business to ring the bell and if they wanted to come all right, and if they didn't they could stay at home, which they did, for only a few came and to them I preached as usual. I have made a practice not to make fires or ring bells. If a minister does these things he may expect to continue doing them. If the people of any community are not interested enough in the church to do these things it is not much use to preach to them, especially in a community that has had opportunity to hear the gospel from the best preachers in the church.

About this time on account of influences growing out of the above incident and other things, this point and one other were transferred to another circuit, but I still remained on the original charge.

The following incident occurred the last year I was on this circuit. There had been through Southeast Missouri a local preacher who had been a drunkard. He was well educated and a brilliant speaker. As a preacher he had no peer in this part of the state, and I doubt if he had his equal anywhere. He had held revivals in the big cities and in the small towns in different states. Occasionally, however, he would fall into his old habit and go down but would be reinstated by the church on repentance and reformation. A young man who lived in the circuit, without consulting me, sent for him to come and hold a meeting in one of my churches, and not knowing but that the invitation came from the pastor he came and began the meeting.

I rode six miles every evening after working all day to hear him. It was a treat to hear him. Any congregation would be greatly profited by having him. He was a great expositor of the Scriptures. One day he and I went out into the woods. We sat down on a log and he told me all about his life. How he and his first wife lived and drank together. How they had been estranged and finally separated. How he had reformed. How he had again and again gone down and come back. How helpless he was to resist when the desire for strong drink came upon him. He told me how he loved the woman who was now his second wife and who had deserted him. How he had followed her to a distant state determined to kill her. He talked of his many struggles to overcome the appetite for strong drink only after a short victory to go down again.

While relating these things to me he wept briny tears. Poor man, so helpless in the clutches of the demon of strong drink, I never felt so sorry for anyone in my life. I asked him how long since his last spree and he promptly and without hesitancy replied, "last week"--just one week before he came to hold this meeting. I flatter myself in the opinion that I am a pretty good judge of human nature and believe this man was absolutely sincere and trying to do right.



I never talked to a man so far above me intellectually as I talked to this man. I kept saying to myself, "I will help him if I can". I knew he had been expelled from the church and that I could not invite him into my pulpit without incurring the censure of those in authority over me. I also knew that no people could listen to him without being instructed in the Scriptures. I furthermore knew that no church house would be cursed or contaminated by this man going into it and preaching as I had heard him preach. My people had not been privileged to hear as able a preacher perhaps in their lifetime and I wanted them to have an opportunity to hear this man. In these days great preachers are scarce. We have very few who measure up to the old time preachers. We may have men with as great intellects, but they have not the spirit and unction that made great preachers in the past.

At the end of our conversation I said to him, "You must not ask me to let you preach and hold meetings in my churches but go to the trustees and if they consent, go in and preach to my people, but do not say anything about what I have said to you. Take a collection if you wish". He did so and preached each night for several days to the entertainment and edification of all who heard him.

Sometime after this I received a card from my presiding elder which was not in very brotherly terms. Among other things he said, "No drunkard should be into one of his churches". This was the straw that broke the camel's back. Of course I had to seek other pastures. I do not know what became of my friend whom I tried to help. I never heard of him after this. I am sure the incident had much to do in my appointment to my next charge.

## CHAPTER XXVI

WILLIAMSVILLE CIRCUIT  
SICKNESS--AFFLICTED WITH BOILS  
THE WORK SUPPLIED--IRONDALE AGAIN  
AN INCIDENT--FACING A DILEMMA--A NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN SCENE  
AN AMUSING INCIDENT--LESTERVILLE CIRCUIT  
FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE--BROTHERS HAW AND HENRY  
MY DECISION TREE--WHAT MY FAMILY THOUGHT

At the ensuing annual conference I was appointed to the Williamsville circuit in Wayne County. It consisted of five preaching places, two of which were unorganized, Williamsville being the chief point and headquarters for the charge. After preaching at the two unorganized places once I did not go back again but just dropped them from the plan of the circuit which was contrary to the discipline. It does not allow a preacher to make his charge smaller. On the other hand, if it can be done, he is expected to make it larger. To tell the truth, I was dissatisfied with the charge, discouraged and out of heart and did not enter into my work with enthusiasm and zeal as I should have done. Some as good men and women as I ever met lived in this circuit. Strong friendships were formed, with few exceptions the most remembered of my fifty years in the ministry.

There were several things that made my ministry on this charge almost if not an entire failure. Chief of these was sickness. Constant going and preaching had worn down my physical frame to the extent that I was an easy prey to disease. If sent to the swamps I was sure to get chills and fever or boils. I had not been on this circuit long until I was covered with boils--Job's afflictions. It was almost impossible for me to lie down and so great was my pain that I could hardly sleep. For weeks I would be unable to do anything. It was embarrassing to be in the homes of the people, but their kindness in ministering to me and their patience were unstinted and unbounded.

Sometimes I would be half unconscious and would rave and talk in such a way that my friends who did not know my habit when having fever thought I was about to make my exit from this world. Under such circumstances I am sure one's place is at home. I would get a little better and then worse again. This continued about six months when I was taken with a severe kidney and bladder trouble. After suffering intensely for a night and a day while attending my quarterly meeting and not being able to lie down or stay in the church, the people I was staying with having gone to church, I hired a boy to drive me four miles to the railroad station and boarded a train for home. After being treated three weeks by our family doctor I was on my feet again and ready for work.

While at home during this sickness my presiding elder, thinking I would not be able to continue the work, supplied it with another preacher.

The rest of the year I had no job and spent most of the time until the next conference on my little farm. I do not remember the amount paid me while on the Williamsville circuit--one hundred fifty, more or less. The people were kind to me and they were satisfied with their preacher.

The next year I was called by their pastor, Brother Eakers, to hold a ten day's meeting. There was a good attendance, but the results of the meeting to me were not satisfactory. While I was preaching one night a young lady in the congregation fell on her knees under the power of the Spirit. For my labors in this meeting I received thirty seven dollars.

But for my health I would have finished the year at this place. In my write-up of Irondale there was an incident which I failed to relate. I engaged Brother T., the pastor of an adjoining circuit to hold a meeting at Irondale. I did not consult my official board, thinking it would meet with their approval, but after my helper came I found that the two principal members of the church upon whom the burden of the meeting would fall were much dissatisfied. They said I had forced the meeting on the community; that it was not a proper time; and that they could not entertain my assistant as they had roomers and were full up. I lived two and a half miles out in the country and could not keep the preacher, and so I faced a dilemma of not knowing whether to close the meeting or go on with it.

Going into the church the second night of the meeting I overheard the parties above referred to in conversation. They were murmuring about the meeting being foisted upon them at this particular time. So with my accustomed way of acting on the impulse of the moment I said, "All right, I will close the meeting". And I did close it at the conclusion of a very promising and profitable service. The preacher preached a good sermon and the outlook for a revival was fair. But few ever knew just why I closed the meeting. Did not even tell Brother T. The membership at large felt disappointed and so did my helper.

I closed the meeting without any explanation or apology, but I knew that by my silence I would suffer. I knew that this thing would meet me again down the line. I knew it would come up in the Bishop's cabinet at the annual conference when my appointment for the ensuing year came up for consideration. I did not tell my presiding elder, but he heard all about it from the preacher whom I had engaged to help me in the meeting. He wrote to the elder giving him a glowing account of the interest in the meeting by the community and the evident prospects of a glorious revival had the meeting continued.

I have made a statement of the circumstances connected with the closing of the meeting and why my silence shielded others directly involved. I write of these things to show how they effected by appointments in the conference. I was sent into another district and to a run down charge which paid a very meager salary. The work was heavy and my health failed completely. I only received one more appointment after this.

One more observation in regard to the above incident: I shall never

forget how everything looked and how I felt the night after the meeting closed. It was a bright moonlight night and everything bright and lovely, but it was midnight to me. It seemed I could hear a voice saying, "Depart, depart. From henceforth let no more fruit be found in thee". It seemed to me that the Spirit of God departed from that church that night and left it to its doom. How has it been with that church since that tragic night? With but one exception (shortly after this) there has never been a revival since that night, eighteen or twenty years ago, although there have been annual attempts by noted pastors and evangelists. Furthermore, the church has steadily declined each year from a half station with two Sundays in the month preaching to services once a month. It now has a small Epworth League and a fairly good Sunday School, but no midweek prayer meeting.

Now I go back to where I left off above. On this the last circuit I traveled there were two churches on opposite sides of the street, Methodist and Baptist. Both had Sunday Schools. While at home on account of my sickness, the superintendents concluded it would save the work of making two fires and reduce the wood bill one half by alternating, holding one Sunday in the Methodist church and the next in the Baptist church. This was the state of things when I returned to the work after my recovery.

This procedure did not meet with my approval, and I told the superintendent of the Methodist school to ring his bell and make his fires and run his school as the church directed him to do so. This he did. It stirred a small ripple, but the waves stilled in a short while. I do not know whether this would have effected my future had I stayed on the work the rest of the year. Sickness compelled me to give it up.

With health broken down and limited financially I wondered what was in store for me at the next annual conference. After a few months' rest I felt I might be able to take work the next year and made my arrangements to go to the conference which convened in Charleston.

I wish to relate another incident in my ministerial career although it may not add to my credit. One wonders why such things can come to any one with a modicum of sense and concerned as to his appearance in the public eye. A Methodist itinerant had many ups and downs in the course of his life. Many ludicrous things happen in a ministry of more than half a century. Often he is the victim of his own folly. One's clothes, even when other things are lacking, will help out wonderfully and I have always tried to be neat and clean.

The incident I started to relate and the humiliation I suffered was because of my carelessness and want of just a little common sense. A short time before conference I ordered through a friend a suit of clothes. As I lived a few miles out of town it was not convenient for me to go often. I had ordered a Prince Albert, the kind that the preachers wore in those days. They were called frock coats. Sack coats were different. The day I started to conference I came to town and got my coat.

I put it on. Friends said it was a nice fit and a dandy. I did not notice the cut of the coat--just put it on and boarded the train. Lo and behold! it was anything else but a Prince Albert. It was as long as one, but cut in sack fashion. It struck me below the knees and looked just like a light overcoat. In fact it was one. I looked like I had on a meal sack with sleeves to it. And there I was in hot September among bishops, presiding elders, and other dignitaries in that coat. How I did sweat! I went all over the town in a vain endeavor to find and buy a light summer coat but could find none.

I had to wear that rig throughout the conference session feeling and thinking that everybody was wondering why that old preacher was wearing his overcoat in that kind of weather. One night as I was going to where I was being entertained, two preachers were walking behind me and as they followed along their funny place was certainly tickled. They were saying something in a low tone of voice interspersed with suppressed laughter. I am sure they were laughing at the old man for wearing an overcoat that hot September night. One of these men is a noted evangelist, the other the chaplain of a great hospital in a great city. I think that coat knocked me out as I have never traveled a circuit since.

At this conference I was entertained in the home of one of the wealthiest men in the town or country--quite an honor. I have never had a truer friend. I have referred to him formerly as the man in whose home I found shelter and warmth one cold winter day. One day he said to me, "Brother Robinson, if the conference does not give you something better than you had last year, if I were you, I would not go to it". And that is just what happened.

I never was ostentatious, have been timid, esteemed others better than myself, and any slight by my fellow man always hurt me. I am sure that at this conference I did not show up good, but it was my own fault. I may have appeared better in the eyes of friends and others than I did to myself. Another thing: I am sure that I was never regarded by my brethren in authority as being competent to be entrusted with any important position or work in the church. In this I guess they were right. I believe it is good for a young preacher in the beginning of his ministry to be put where he may get help and inspiration to attain to higher things. In the beginning of my ministry I did not get this encouragement.

After all I guess one will be given all that he is fit for and deserves. At the time of this conference I was sixty three, and my health not being the best, I should have received some consideration in the matter of my appointment and my ability to do the work. Instead I was sent to a circuit with six or seven churches separated ten, twenty, and thirty miles--the closest from my home being thirty miles. There was an appropriation by the mission board of a hundred and fifty dollars with the probability that the circuit would pay that much. It would have been more like the fair thing if they had appropriated three hundred dollars to a circuit of that kind.

I could not do the work and I said so. I told the Bishop if the

conference would not grant me a supernumerary relation that I would ask for a location. He was in favor of locating me but some of my brethren stood by me and the conference adjourned without taking any action in the matter. They thought I would change my mind and go to the work assigned me. But they were mistaken. I thought it was an injustice to send me to such a work. Furthermore, I was sure that under the most favorable conditions the circuit could not, or would not, pay a salary sufficient to meet my needs. I had traveled the circuit in my early ministry and received only a small pittance and the charge was so large that the work there and on the farm was so hard on me that my health broke down and I had to give up the circuit in the middle of the conference year, and, as stated elsewhere, was compelled to take a superannuate relation. The memory of the suffering and the poverty consequent on the failure of that circuit to support me is still fresh in my memory after these fifty years. So I did not want to endure the hardships and privations this circuit would entail upon me again.

Notwithstanding all these considerations it was a sore trial not to go to the work entrusted to me. The conference might locate me, and probably would have done so, had I not stated to the brethren that if they would not give me a supernumerary relation, which means partial disability, to give me a location. According to the discipline the conference could have located me for refusing to go to my work. It was also a violation of my ordination vows. I had promised my brethren to go where in "their godly judgment" they were minded to send me. I did not think it was godly judgment to send me to that circuit but now believe it would have been better had I gone.

In my early ministry I spent a year in the bounds of that circuit when, without any concern for the morrow, free as the wild life that had their homes in the trees and among the rocks and clear sparkling streams, I climbed the hills and from their tops dislodged huge boulders and watched them roll with terrific speed, gathering momentum as they plunged along and obliterating every obstacle in their path until they reached the level below a quarter of a mile or more from where they started.

Now after thirty years the conference sends me back and I refuse to go. I wish I had gone for since then I have done very little. Seemingly so at least. Yet had I gone I might now be in my heavenly Father's house. I am sure I could not have done the work needed to be done and held up during the entire year. I am very grateful to my brethren for not locating me and will always have a large place in my heart for Brothers Haw and Henry. Except one year since I have been on the conference as a superannuate receiving a small yearly allowance.

After conference, thinking over what was best to do, I concluded to make one trip to the circuit to which I had been appointed. So with my wife in our buggy we made a trip to two places on the work. Arriving at Lesterville Saturday evening we stayed all night with a man by the name of Irvin and Sunday morning I preached to a few people at eleven o'clock. The church house was a barn-like structure and unfinished. The membership consisted of the members of two families mostly, in all about a dozen members with but little prospects of gaining from the outside as the

community was mostly Baptists. We went from this place to the town of Centerville in Reynolds County on the west fork of Black River and put up with one Mr. Sloan, a kinsman of my wife. Quite a good congregation gathered for the evening service. Still undecided as to what to do, I announced I would be back a month from that time.

I think I would have had a pleasant year so far as that place was concerned. They treated me kindly and I believe they would have been glad for me to stay as their pastor. The next day we went eighteen miles to where my wife's people lived, stayed one night and then returned home. We traveled on this trip something over one hundred and forty miles. When the time came for me to meet the appointment made on the previous trip, I was greatly distressed and did not know what to do. It seemed that I could not bear the thought of undertaking the task with its consequent suffering and hardships, and I could hardly bear the thought of not going. After halting between two opinions--my desire to do the right thing and a dread of going to the circuit--I concluded to go and make one round, if no more. So I started and after going a little way I turned round to go back. I would stop, think over the situation and conclude I better go to the work. I kept this up until I had gone five or six miles but finally stopped under a big oak tree just after I passed the Sloan school house on the Caledonia and Potosi highway (There was no highway then, but in building the new highway the oak tree was cut down), and as I sat on my horse thinking what to do I made a definite decision. I settled the question then and there naming the oak "Decision Tree", and turned my face toward home. I spent most of the year working on the farm.

The conference had appropriated a hundred and fifty dollars mission money to the circuit, and it was not long after making my final decision I received a twenty five dollar check on the Board of Missions. My presiding elder was sure that my decision at the conference not to go to the work was not final and so he sent me this check, but I sent it back to him stating that I had fully decided the matter and any further insistence on his part would be useless. He still insisted that I ought to go. He was a good man and wrote kindly to me giving good counsel, but what part he had in my appointment to this circuit I do not know. It is my opinion, however, that he had much to do with it. He died soon after the conference.

There are several reasons why I did as I did in refusing to go to this circuit. Judging from the past it seemed my brethren thought any kind of a circuit good enough for me, and as I had always gone to any work assigned me without murmur or complaint they could send me to any place without the least fear that I would not go. There must be an end to some things and this continual grind was one of those things.

## CHAPTER XXVII

FAMILY LOYALTY--ELLINGTON--HIGH-PRESSURE METHODS  
HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED--CONFERENCE AT CARUTHERSVILLE  
ELECTION OF GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES  
THE SABBATH--THE HOME--MODERNISM--A HALF GOSPEL

My family had always been loyal to the church, submitting to hardships and poverty for its sake, but they were not blind to the fact that somehow and year after year the work to which I was assigned fell in the class of circuits where there was arduous labor and not much prospect for success in any appreciable way. Why was this so and who was at fault? They could see that there were inequalities in salaries and in the appointments and favoritism in the conference, and sometimes expressed themselves in weak terms. They said I would submit to most anything in the matter of my appointments. This, of course, made it unpleasant to me though I knew they had some grounds for their contention.

What made it so painful to me was that I saw on their part a submissiveness to hardship and privation on my account. If ever an itinerant preacher had a loyal and faithful family it was this preacher. However, I am glad to record that my family is not the only faithful itinerant family I have seen. I have seen many faithful families of my brethren in the ministry in whom was found the highest type of faithfulness and heroism on this earth. Eternity alone will reveal what these faithful souls suffered that the father and husband might fulfill the ministry committed to him.

That there is respect of persons in the ministry cannot be truthfully denied, and it is most in evidence among those who aspire to place and power. In this class are those who seek the office of presiding elder or to be appointed to stations in towns and cities. It looms up greater after they attain to these places. By this class another class of preachers is rated as only fit for the country charges or backwoods circuit. By them the Scriptural injunction, "Let every man esteem others better than himself," is violated.

I attended a district conference the next spring at Elsenore, Missouri. My status as a member of this conference was not affected by my refusing to go to my work because the annual conference had taken no action, and my relation to it, therefore, was not changed as it remained for the next conference to determine my case. As a matter of fact, I was a member of this district conference for the circuit to which I had been appointed was in the bounds of this district, but the presiding elder, president of the conference, decided that I was not eligible. After some discussion I was allowed to take my seat in that body. I filled the pulpit the morning hour of the first session of the conference to a congregation that filled the



house from the text found in II Cor. 4:7, "For we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power might be of God and not us".

I had liberty in preaching and trust that good was accomplished. It was an honor conferred on me by my brethren which I greatly appreciated. After hearing me preach, several of the brethren solicited me to hold meetings for them, and having no work of my own, I consented. My first meeting was at Ellington, Rev. H. L. Taylor, pastor. I preached twice a day for ten days. The holiness people were holding a meeting at the same time and in the same community. I had fairly good congregations at the evening services, but only a few at the day meeting. In the morning of each day I spent an hour or more in secret prayer, but the results of the meeting were meager. I just preached the plain gospel in my earnest and sincere way. I did not resort to any high-pressure methods to get people into the church. After preaching I would give a call for the unconverted to come to the altar for prayer, and if none came I turned the meeting over to the pastor.

I have many times witnessed occasions when the preacher in a protracted effort would plead for most an hour with the unsaved to accept Christ. They made proposition after proposition and by various manipulations trap the people into some sort of commitment to their propositions. I have seen them almost literally pull children and young people to the altar against their will, and after getting them there put such questions to them as that no self-respecting person with any sort of moral training could refuse to answer in the affirmative, and on that answer the preacher would announce to the congregation that Brother or Sister So and So had been saved. Again, "All of you who will accept Christ hold up your hand" and then announce, in case of a response which generally happened, that a number had been saved.

Invariably there was not the least evidence of repentance or faith in those making the profession. I have seen people come to the church during these so-called revivals for the first time set upon by "personal workers" sent out by the preacher in the congregation, driven away from the meeting and never came back, when if they had been let alone and been permitted to listen to the preaching, they might have accepted the truth to the saving of their souls. I am sure than many people do not go to church simply because they are afraid they will be set upon by certain ones who have a "zeal but not according to knowledge". It is the work of the ministry to present the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way that it will appeal to the mind and heart of those who hear and let the Holy Spirit do his office work.

None but the saved can ever know the joys of salvation. The church of the present day is full of unsaved people. They have never experienced the consciousness of guilt or of sins forgiven--no remorse for past sins, which is invariably present in true repentance. They have not sorrowed after a godly sort and their life and practice are not any different to what they were formerly. They were deceived by false teachers who will have a fearful account to give at the last day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known.

OCTOBER 29, 1929

I have just returned from the St. Louis annual conference at Caruthersville. Through the kindness of Rev. L. D. Nichol I was enabled to attend. He took me in his car. The distance from my home to the seat of the conference was not less than one hundred and fifty miles, and we made the trip in half of a day. In my active ministry it would have taken me riding horseback four or five days. How things have changed! The session in many respects was so different to what it was in the beginning of my ministry that it did not seem to be a Methodist conference at all. Only one sermon preached and that was the evening before the opening session the next morning. Formerly the afternoons were given to preaching, meeting of the Bishop's cabinet and committees. At the morning hour it was customary to hear the connectional men and devote the nights to preaching services instead of to anniversaries, but this session was given entirely to business. With a few exceptions there was lacking the religious element which formerly characterized the annual conference. One afternoon, with few exceptions, the members of the conference attended a ball game at the high school grounds. The next morning the Bishop stopped the proceedings long enough to announce the result of a football game in another town. The whole session was characterized with business, banqueting and leisure.

The laymen had a banquet. Also the old superannuates were given a banquet at which these old heroes were capped with a red paper cap and given a toy whistle or rattler, and two girls sang, acted, and recited for the unedification of these servants of the Lord. This, to my way of thinking was out of place at a religious gathering. There are times and places where these things may be all right, but there is no place for these in any church service or worship. The conference should be pervaded and shot through with the spirit of devotion and solemn worship.

The Bishop always preaches Sunday morning at the church where the conference is being held. After the sermon he ordains deacons and elders. At three in the afternoon the memorial service is held for those who have died during the year. The next in order now is the reading of the appointments and immediately after adjournment the preachers and delegates leave for their homes.

At this conference in less than an hour there was a dead stillness about the church where a short time ago all was bustle and life. Supposing there would be an evening service I went and found the church closed and deserted. This to me was an unheard of thing at an annual conference of the Methodist Church. In other days the conference was looked forward to by the preachers as a time of joy and blessing. They gathered strength for the hardships and self-denial of the coming year. I am writing of old-time conference sessions.

The conference was opened with a prayer service and the administration of the sacrament and then a soul stirring talk by the Bishop ere business began. At eleven o'clock there was a great sermon by the Bishop or some visiting preacher. Again at three in the afternoon there was preaching by some member of the conference. Often during this service the

spiritual tide ran high--sometimes to the shouting point. I can recall many of these services and how they brought new courage and determination to do and to dare for my Lord and Master. Then at the evening services some of our great missionary secretaries or a missionary from a foreign land would give a soul-stirring address, and the congregation was stirred to a greater zeal for missions. Even the collection, if they had any, had a ring about not always present today on such occasions. And thus it was throughout the entire session of the conference. Alas, how are the mighty fallen!

I shall never forget the feeling of loneliness that came over me as I stood there in that church yard. It looked deserted. I thought the pastor should have had his regular service anyway, but all was dark and not a sound but the falling rain. I stood for a moment and tried to visualize the contrast of the silence and stillness of the moment with the departing of the multitude a few hours gone by. The whole scene was so unusual and strange to an old man who had heard the shout of victory in the olden days--days that now seem gone forever.

It does not argue good for the future of the church of Jesus Christ when a town as large as Caruthersville cannot, or will not, entertain free a conference composed of a few hundred ministers of the church. With its wealth and opulence it could have, without being burdened, entertained the conference. The conclusion, therefore, is inevitable that there was not a willingness to do so.

They gave the members and delegates bed and breakfast in their homes. Lunch and dinner (dinner and supper, I called it) were served in the basement of the church at fifty cents a plate. I did well the first few days at a restaurant for fifteen and twenty five cents a meal. The latter days of the conference I was entertained through the kindness of a preacher, W. E. Brown.

Not only does it argue no good for the church, but it is an omen forecasting dishonor and blight to the town or community that fails to honor God's servants as they should. "There is that which withholdeth and yet scattereth abroad". This town should have received their servants of the Lord and gladly entertained them in their homes.

It is a privilege and a blessing to have a consecrated minister in the homes of the people. God's blessings rested upon the house of Obadiah for the sake of the ark in his house. "He that receiveth you receiveth me."--Jesus. No good can come to any city that does not honor the servants of God. Those people had just completed a fine church building but had not finished paying for it. They must needs raise some money and fell upon this plan of charging the preachers and laymen of the conference for lunch and dinner. Of course they could afford to help pay for the church, but the town could not afford to let them do it. Selah.

I never witnessed such a breaking up of a conference in all my itinerant life. In less than one hour all had disappeared. Did a voice say, "Depart, depart"? I venture to say this city missed a great opportunity by lack of big souled hospitality on this occasion.

Another thing I witnessed at that conference was the electioneering by certain preachers and their henchmen for their election as delegates to the general conference. In former days it was the rule for the office of Bishop to find the man and not the man find the office, and the church always had great preachers as Bishops. There was no evident place or office seeking. The church doubtless had men in it who aspired to high places in the control of its affairs, but if so it was not openly manifested. No log-rolling or wire-pulling for the office of Bishop and presiding elder as at this conference.

Did they succeed in electing their candidates? They did. And why not? Simply because a majority of the members of the conference were of one mind in such matters. It has been noticeable for the last three decades at least that certain members of the conference were appointed presiding elders continuously from year to year from among a certain class of preachers. This did not just happen so--they had go-betweens between them and the appointing power. Such things are contrary to the genius and spirit of the itinerant system of the Methodist Church.

There are exceptions to all rules. At this conference there were elected to the General Conference some of as true and tried men as can be found anywhere and who had no hand in their election, but this cannot be said of others. Has Methodism come to the parting of the ways? Has her glory departed? The great annual conferences of the past are gone forever. Henceforth these annual convocations will be of short duration interspersed with banqueting, sightseeing, and business. I fear the salt has lost its saltiness and that the soul saving and transforming power of the church is gone and will be found in it no more.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South is completely modernized--and modernism is anti-Christian--but not all of its ministry and membership; for many, perhaps a majority, still adhere to the old time practices and beliefs and are holding on to God and His dear Son. But the machinery of the church is in the hands of the modernists who are moulding and shaping the church of tomorrow and none dare oppose them for fear of ostracism.

The onflow of modernism is not, and will not be, checked because conservatism is sitting still and silent. There is no controversy, no arguing. Passiveness is above par, nonresistance, a virtue, and things are just drifting. The Sabbath is gone, and the home is past its meridian and approaching the night of dissolution. When the Sabbath and homes of a nation are gone, its civilization is gone, for its foundations have been destroyed.

As long as the ministry of the Methodist Church remained true and loyal to the cardinal doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ and preached them with an unction begotten by a great conviction of their truthfulness, and as a direct revelation from God, they were abundant in fruitfulness, but when modernism invaded its ranks and undermined the faith of the common people in the Bible as God's revelation to man, the streams that watered the life of the church began to dry up, and it has become barren. Sin, righteousness and judgment are the "big three" of the gospel. Heaven and hell, like a mighty turbulent stream, flows through. To preach that God's love to fallen and sinful men is such as to preclude justice and judgment is a perversion of the Scriptures.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

JUST RETRIBUTION--BACKGROUND OF GOD'S LOVE  
 THE FINAL APPEAL--AT PIEDMONT--PREACHING AT IRONTON  
 MY PRESENT RELATION TO THE CONFERENCE

If there is no retributive justice then there is no justice at all. If wrong doing is not to be punished and innocence vindicated then the law of the jungle is the only law for all time and for all people. No hell, no heaven. No everlasting death, no everlasting life. None lost, none saved. Nothing lost, nothing found. If none is in jeopardy, why go to the rescue? If there is but one road to Kingston, get in it and trot along--you will get there. There are no side paths or lateral roads to lead you astray. You cannot miss it if you persevere.

If there is no Broadway to hell, then hell is a superstition. Gehenna is a place just outside of Jerusalem in the Valley of Hinnon where the carcasses of dead animals and the refuse of the city were thrown. Hell is only a place for the goats. "And he shall separate the righteous from the wicked as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. He shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left. These (the goats) shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." If there is no hell then the poor old goats are in a bad way, for there is nowhere for them to go.

One is foolish to seek after something that never was lost. A preacher who believes there is no hell in which men can be lost is foolish to sacrifice ease, wealth, comfort and all in order to preach salvation to men when there is nothing to save them from. It is only those who are in peril that need rescuing, only the lost to be found. Jesus came from heaven to seek and to save that which was lost. Where did he seek in order to find? In the world, the only place where there were lost men and women. Why did he seek them? Simply that he might save them. Save them from what? And thus we might argue in a circle till doom's day and not find any solution of the problem of sin and salvation if there is to be no day of retribution.

The incentives to salvation: of all the incentives to obedience to the command of God there is none greater than the fear of the judge of all the earth--the fear of the Lord. Modernism, or the abettors of the doctrine that there is no hell, poo-poo the idea that fear of punishment or the hope of reward is an incentive to seek salvation. They ignore the common traits or characteristics of human nature. The instinct that drives the brute creation to places of safety in time of danger is imbedded in the very constitution of the human race accelerated by the possession of a knowledge of danger and safety along the paths they travel. Fear shuns danger, non-fear rushes into it.

A person who really and truly believes and accepts the fact of future awards and punishment will be deterred in a great measure from doing things which will bring him suffering and loss.

I am sure that the anticipation of the possession of the glorious heritage that I have in Christ Jesus my Lord is the great motive power that drives and holds me to the task to which I have committed myself. It is written that "For the joy that was set before Him, Jesus endured the cross and despised the shame." (Heb. 12:2). And Moses refused the throne of Egypt "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; for he had respect unto the recompence of reward, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures of Egypt." (Heb. 11:23-26).

The wrath of God. There is no principle more deeply implanted in the mind of man than that cruelty and wrong should be punished. Upon the hypothesis that the future holds nothing against wrong doing; that the wickedness of the wicked is condoned and covered up in consideration of God's great love for man is to dethrone God and rob Him of all semblance of justice. Modernism talks glibly of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ as the great incentive to a life of godliness disregarding the fact that man in his carnal state cannot love God nor appreciate His love in the least degree. A heart that is filled with hate for God and His Christ has no room in it for the love of God.

Hence the necessity of a agent outside of man, or not of man, in order to awaken in him a feeling of the sense of his lost condition. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God". God has ordained that "by the foolishness of preaching" men shall be saved. Again the question, "Saved from what?" if there is no hell to be saved from. The gospel of Jesus Christ is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" The word of God is a hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces and as a fire that burneth.

The gospel of glad tidings. The gospel proclaimed by the heralds of Christ reveals to man his sinful state because it brings to light the hidden things of darkness and sets forth the wrath of God against these hidden things. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness". The mission of Jesus Christ to this world was to seek and to save the lost and the only purpose of the proclamation of the gospel is to bring to men the knowledge of their lost condition and of a Saviour that came to save them. The background of God's love for fallen man is his hatred of sin that wrecked that which he loved. Godlike love is only found in those who love God; and this love is only expended on objects that are Godlike. The greater the love the greater the wrath for that which destroys that which was loved.

God, whose name and nature is love, can only properly and truly evaluate the loss of the soul of one of his creatures. None can measure the extent of grief and sense of loss that comes to Christ in the loss of one soul for which He died. If God's love is so infinite, and if this great love is the background of his hatred for that which destroys the objects

of His love, what must the measure or extent of His wrath be? "Who can stand before Him when His wrath is kindled but a little? Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath." (Ps. 90:11). "Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with His anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue as a devouring fire: and His breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity." (Isa. 30:27,28).

God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). The wrath of God is not a blind, unbridled burst of anger, relentless and cruel, but a calm judicial execution upon wrong-doers of the penalty of violated law. The determinate motive or cause is a sense of justice. Love and mercy are mother and daughter while justice sits stern and relentless as umpire. Putridity and stench are abhorrent and repellent to taste and smell, and so are injustice and rottenness to moral character.

God's holiness and justice preclude any approach toward injustice and wickedness. He abhors sin. He hates it. It is foreign to every attribute of His being. "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to God." The forward, lying lips, the sacrifices of the wicked, all are an abomination in the sight of God. The segregation of the wicked from the righteous is of universal insistence and acceptance. In the very nature of things it is imperative. It is just. It is wise. Every instinct and longing of the clean and the upright seek the companionship of the pure and the noble. Heaven would not be heaven to the pure and good if it were the abode of the good and the bad alike. In the constitution of things there must of necessity be a separation of the wicked from the good.

Where would there be any incentive to live a good life were there no differences of allotment of awards between the righteous and the wicked? The final appeal is to the scriptures. They for all time settle this question and there is no ground for appeal from their decision. There is no higher court. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:49).

I shall now return to the narration of my autobiography where I left off with an account of the session of the conference at Caruthersville and some thoughts on Modernism.

From Ellington I went to Piedmont in Wayne County and preached ten days in the Methodist Church of which Rev. W. E. Judy, now gone to his reward, was pastor. We held two services each day. But few attended. Usually they were the select ones of the few faithful members of the church. The services as a rule consisted of a short talk on some scripture suitable to inspire greater zeal in the salvation of sinners and that would strengthen the faith of believers, followed by short testimonies by those present. The night or evening services were on the usual order--preaching and an altar service.

I would preach and then give a call for penitents. If none came forward

at the first call. I seldom made a second one but turned the meeting over to the pastor to close as he thought best. As was my custom I spent part of the morning and evening of each day alone in secret prayer and the reading of the scriptures. I was possessed with a great desire to succeed and to witness the salvation of souls in these meetings but was disappointed, for there were but few conversions and accessions to the church. I pleaded with God to give me tokens of his presence with me in the conversion of souls. I am at a loss to know why I had such little effect. I am sure I was actuated by the best of motives. I had left all in order to preach to these people. I threw my whole life into the work and did my best. And there were good congregations, especially at the night services, and in many ways much interest was manifested.

From Piedmont I went to Williamsville and preached ten days for Brother Eaker, who was pastor of our church there. As at the other places mentioned the general interest was good, but no special result by way of the conversion of sinners and additions to the church. There were at times during the preaching visible manifestations of the presence and power of God. While I was preaching one night a young woman fell on her knees under the power of the Spirit. There was, and had existed for some time, trouble between some members of the church, and this hindered the work, as it will always do.

In the choir was a young man, a member of a prominent family in the church, who had committed an offense that should bar any person from a prominent place in the church or in respectable society. This young man had made no restitution, nor did he show any signs of repentance for the wrong committed. At each service he was conspicuously present in the choir and thus gave great offense to a large part of the community. Of course, this was against the success of the meeting.

There is a soft effeminate code of morals held by a large company of people that gives to such as this young man the right to participate in the holy song service of the church though they show no sign of repentance and make no effort at restitution. A man who tramples virtue under his feet and robs innocence of its purity has no right of equality in society. When it comes to them participating in the choir song service of the church, a healthy and virulent public sentiment should bar them from it unless there is a good case of repentance and reformation.

While I did not in a direct and specific way expose and rebuke such, I made it plain that I knew of his moral character and so spoke that the congregation knew my speech was directed to this particular case. Of course, it gave great offense to his people of whom quite a number belonged to the church.

Also there were many on the outside who could not understand why such characters should be barred from participation in the song service of the church, for were they not sinners such as Jesus came to save? And did not they need the influence of the church to help them to a better life? This sort of reasoning is from a wrong standpoint. Such people are ignorant of God and of His plan of salvation.



A church is a body of holy people, the body a Christ, who is also its Head. God's holiness precludes the entrance of unholy persons into His church. There must be repentance and restitution on the part of any who seek union with Christ and His people. The song service is a part of the worship of God. It should be performed with as much solemnity as prayer or preaching. They all go together.

None would contend that this young man had a right to preach the gospel or that he was qualified to lead in public prayer, yet they contended that it was perfectly right and proper for him to take a place in the choir. "Consistency, thou art a jewel." My stand on those things was apparent to those who came to the meeting. The condition of the church at this place was a great hindrance. The results of the meeting were disappointing. The pastor, who by the way, was a fine man and a good preacher, gave each night an urgent call for penitents, but failed to get any response.

From Williamsville I went, according to previous arrangement, to Chapel Hill and preached for them ten days. Each of the services was very well attended. The day services were, as usual, only attended by a select few. The evening congregations were good, taxing the capacity of the building. At each evening service I gave a call for penitents to come and kneel at the altar for prayer and instruction. Quite a number of little boys would come, but they did not manifest very much concern. They did not pray nor show any emotion. Interest in the meeting increased for five or six nights and then declined to the close. However, the attendance continued good to the end. I did not have to urge the Christians to come into the altar and talk to those little boys. This they did readily and willingly, but the apparent disinterest of those boys seemed to have a paralyzing effect on the workers in the meeting, hence the decline in the interest at the close. I do not mean that the services in general declined and became draggy. It was only in the altar service that the interest lagged. The singing was fine, the prayers fervent and unctious, the preaching manifestly enjoyed, and the congregations remained good to the very last service which was a glad and joyous one. I sure did my best.

Previous to this meeting I had held a revival at Edgar Chapel about four miles from this place (Chapel Hill) with good results. It lasted four or five days. Had it continued longer I think much more good would have been done. The interest grew from the beginning to the end. Two men up in years and not in the habit of going to church came to the meeting. They sat back near the door, but as the meeting progressed, they moved up toward the pulpit and the night we closed they were up near the altar. Had the meeting continued I believe they would have been converted, but the pastor thought it best to close.

Those meetings were the last I ever held. I went home from Chapel Hill, and, if memory serves me right, have never had a call to hold a meeting since. I think I took home with me about seventy five dollars as a result of my labor. Except what little has been paid me for funerals, I have received but little for my preaching from that day to this, though I have continued to preach as occasion offered.

I have not kept account of the number of times I have preached, the funerals I have conducted, the number of conversions I have had, the number of people I have received into the church, nor the number of couples I have married. I wish I knew. Wish I had kept an account. When I read of what other preachers have done I conclude that I have accomplished but little and have but little to my account.

Sometime after my superannuation at the request of Brother Duggins, presiding elder of the Farmington district, I supplied Ironton church for about six months. I did not assume any pastoral oversight of the church, nor was I responsible for the conference collections. I was to preach two Sundays in the month morning and evening without further responsibility. They were good people, and it was delightful to preach to them. My association with them was very pleasant and I trust helpful to them. They gave me one hundred and ten dollars for my services. I shall always remember my association with them with a great deal of pleasure.

I have sustained my present relation to the conference as a superannuate since nineteen hundred and ten--twenty years. In this time the conference has paid me by a rough estimate between four and five thousand dollars. I have no way of verifying this statement as I have not the minutes of the conference each year. It may be more, hardly less. Whatever the amount may have been I feel that I have been a burden on my conference and not an asset.

While I was young I could care for myself, but now I am old and cannot work and have but little in store for the future. I do not know how I would get along if the small amount the conference pays me were withheld. My brethren have been very gracious to me. My superannuation came too soon. I have lost much time. Perhaps I only am to blame. My preaching days are over. The last few years I have tended my garden, kept a few chickens and a cow or two, and in this way, with what the conference gave me, we have had sufficient of this world's goods so that we have not suffered want.

January nineteen hundred and thirty one. I am now past eighty two. I preach once each month in the old brick church at Irondale, built more than sixty years ago when I was in my late teens by those who have long since gone to their long home. Most all, if not all, of them were good men and women. I feel certain that they rest from their labors, and "their works do follow them". This old church stands as a monument to their loyalty to their church and to their Master.

It cannot be long until I shall join them. I have preached quite a lot of funerals. Two were the funerals of two of the oldest people in all the country round about. I have been preaching in the old church for ten years once each month and shall continue to do so as long as I am able. I love to preach when I get at it, but it is a great cross to get at it. When I begin, I soon lose all embarrassment and fear.